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## 1st gas price rollback of 2020

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA  
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REPORTER

Just a month before the CNMI government goes into austerity, the CNMI saw its first gas price rollback of 2020, with prices dropping at both Mobil Oil Marianas Inc. and Shell Marianas earlier this month.

Mobil gas stations took the lead, dropping its gas prices by 10 cents on Feb. 5. Shell followed suit shortly after. Both companies raise or lower their gas prices without prior notice but they typically mirror each other's price adjustments.

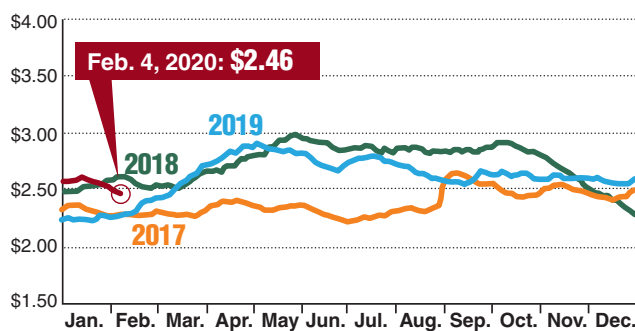
As of Feb. 5, Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. and Mariana Acquisition Corp., which owns Shell Marianas, reduced gas prices from \$4.139 per gallon of Extra fuel to \$4.039 per gallon while their Su-

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### Pump and crude oil continue to push cheaper

The national gas price average is \$2.46, which is five cents cheaper than last week and 12 cents cheaper than the beginning of the year. Motorists are paying less to fill up especially as crude oil prices are less expensive.

#### National average gas price comparison, 2017-2020



Source: AAA  
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service



The Mobil gas station on Middle Road in Garapan displays the new gas prices. The CNMI saw its first gas rollback of the year, with both Mobil and Shell lowering their gas prices by 10 cents last week.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

## Self-screening for food stamp aid now available

By JUSTINE NAUTA  
justine\_nauta@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Government employees who may be rendered eligible for food stamp assistance due to cuts in their work hours can now check their eligibility using an online self-screening

assessment tool.

The local food stamp program, Nutrition Assistance Program, is now offering digital and paper copies of self-screening assessment for household heads who are or aren't U.S. citizens so they can make a preliminary de-

termination if they are eligible for assistance.

Though the NAP has not changed its income eligibility standards, they are hoping that, with this self-screening assessment, more people who

See FOOD STAMP on Page 4

### DESPITE THE OPPOSITION OF SOME BUSINESSES

## House eliminates grace period for importers to pay excise tax

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

After listening to opposition and concern from some businesses, the House of Representatives ultimately

passed yesterday a bill that eliminates the 30-day grace period for importers to pay the excise tax on goods that require Customs inspection and clearance.

House Bill 21-104, which

was authored by House floor leader Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan), passed with 12 "yes" votes. Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan) abstained. It now goes to the CNMI

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### INSIDE



#### NATION

Bernie Sanders held a narrow lead over Pete Buttigieg in the New Hampshire Democratic primary.

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#### WORLD

Sudan authorities agree to hand Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court.

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#### LIFE & STYLE

Actor Jussie Smollett is indicted Tuesday for a second time on charges of lying to police.

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# Local

## SNILD confirms Demapan as SHEFA board member



Kaelani B. Demapan, seated next to Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, poses with members of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation after SNILD granted the recommendation of its Judiciary and Governmental Operations to confirm her nomination as a member of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance board. Also in the photo are Northern Marianas College officials, family members, friends, and supporters.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation confirmed Tuesday the nomination of Kaelani Marie B. Demapan as a member of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance board.

"I feel very honored to be part of the board," said Demapan, who is an early intervention counselor with the Northern Marianas College.

Demapan said that among the things that the SHEFA board needs to consider is to provide financial assistance to those who are pursuing high-

er education here on Saipan.

At the confirmation hearing last Jan. 31, the Legislative Delegation, chaired by Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan), moved to confirm Demapan's nomination.

Demapan will serve the remaining two years of CNMI chief probation officer Ursula Lifofoi-Aldan, who passed away last September.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, who nominated Demapan to the SHEFA board, earlier said that, with an accomplished academic

track, he believes that Demapan would bring to the table new ideas about how SHEFA can continue to assist college students and trade school students realize their ambition in pursuing their higher education and skills training.

Demapan, herself a recipient of SHEFA and CNMI Scholarship Fund, graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Chaminade University in Honolulu and earned a master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Michigan. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

## Camacho: 100% compliance among parolees

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
Kimberly\_bautista@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The CNMI Board of Parole has had 100% compliance among its over 20 parolees in the last few years, according to board chair Ramon "RB" Camacho.

He said that despite the uneven ratio of parolees to parole officers, they have not had much trouble with the convicts under their care.

"We have had a 100% compliance rate. We haven't had any complaints so far. These people have faced the consequences so they are cautious [and don't want] to repeat those same mistakes," he said.



Camacho

Currently, there are 35 convicts who have been granted parole, 22 of whom are employed. There are also only two parole officers who look after all 35 parolees.

Camacho would like to

thank the business community for giving these parolees a chance by accepting them into the workforce because these individuals have gone through the system and are trying to turn their lives around.

"The parolees went through the whole nine yards of criminal justice process, from arrest, to detention, to court, and down to the prison. ...So I'm encouraging other members of the business community to give these people a chance and employ them. They are human beings too," Camacho said.

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# Burglary and theft at old Hopwood campus

Last Friday, Feb. 7, 2020, at about 7:20am, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call reporting a possible burglary and theft incident at the Hopwood Middle

School in Koblerville. DPS dispatched units to the area.

Upon arriving at the scene, police met with an employee of the school, who stated that they were unlocking the front

gate when they noticed scattered papers near the entrance to the main office. The individual then opened the principal and vice principal's office and noticed scattered items

throughout the room. The individual also noticed that the desk drawers had all been left open. The individual then notified the principal and vice principal and called for police assistance.

After a quick inventory, the principal and vice principal stated that the only item missing was a black cellphone confiscated weeks earlier. After the incident, school officials tried to reach the parents of the cellphone owner, but did not get the chance to

speak to them.

If you or someone you know want to report a crime that occurred in your school, we encourage you to call 911. If you would like to remain anonymous, call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (PR)

## Public warned of high surf, rip currents

A northerly swell is producing hazardous surf across the Marianas. There will be hazardous surf and a high risk of rip currents the next several days.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations

Center State Warning Point, a north swell will combine with building northeast swell to prolong rough seas.

The high surf advisory remains in effect through Friday night, with a high risk of rip currents through Friday night.

A small craft advisory also remains in effect through Sat-

urday night.

Along north facing reefs, expect hazardous surf of 8 to 11 feet to continue through at least today, Thursday. Another pulse of north-northeast swell will arrive today and may raise surf another 1 to 2 feet. Surf may stay hazardous through Saturday. The risk of rip currents will also be high for the next several

days along east facing reefs. Surf will likely become hazardous at 12 feet or more by today.

The public is advised to avoid venturing out near reef lines along north and east facing reefs. If you become caught in a rip current, remain calm. Stay afloat while waiting for help. If you have to swim out of a rip current,

swim parallel to shore, then back toward the beach when possible. Do not attempt to swim directly against a rip current as you will tire quickly.

In the small craft advisory, the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point said that combined seas of 9 to 10 feet will build to 11 to 13 feet by today and 12

to 14 feet tomorrow, Friday. Highest seas will be east of the islands.

Winds and rough seas will be hazardous to operators of small craft.

The public and inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions. (Saipan Tribune)



### COMMUNITY BRIEFS

#### Naval Base Guam to conduct command assessment of readiness and training

**SANTA RITA, Guam**—U.S. Naval Base Guam security forces and other first responders will participate in the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training on Feb. 18-21.

CART is a Commander, Navy Installations Command program that evaluates installation response capabilities in various scenarios. It will take place on NBG Main Base to include Apra Harbor and involves training scenarios that replicate real-world events. CART is a regularly scheduled exercise.

This exercise will incorporate blank ammunition fire as part of simulated attacks. Residents are advised to not be alarmed if they see or hear an increase in exercise related activity within NBG Main Base and Apra Harbor.

This exercise is scheduled to last from 8am to 4pm each day.

During this exercise there will be increased patrols and security activity in and around NBG Main Base. Measures have been taken to minimize disruptions to normal operations, but there may be times when the exercise causes increased traffic and delays for base access.

Additionally, the NBG Giant Voice system will be utilized during the exercise. Residents living in the surrounding areas of the GV speakers will hear exercise announcements throughout the week. (PR)

#### 5.3-magnitude quake hits Saipan

At 8:58pm on Feb. 11 2020, a report of a 5.3-magnitude earthquake occurred 150 miles east-north-east of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center did not issue any tsunami warnings or advisories. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning

Point at 237-8000. (PR)

#### Quake hits Saipan on Feb. 10

At 11:02am on Feb. 10, 2020, a report of a 4.6-magnitude earthquake occurred 155 kilometers east southeast of Saipan in Northern Mariana Islands. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center did not issue any tsunami warnings or advisories. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. (PR)

#### Guam tax refunds out

**HAGATNA, Guam**—The Department of Revenue & Taxation has processed and the Department of Administration will mail 203 tax refund checks this week.

The checks total approximately \$699,157, including refunds garnished to repay government debts, for error-free returns filed on or before Aug. 17, 2019.

For inquiries, contact the Income Tax Branch of the Department of Revenue & Taxation at (671) 635-1809 or Edward Birn, Department of Administration at (671) 475-1250. (PR)

#### E-File & Serve having technical glitches

The CNMI Judiciary's electronic filing system, E-File & Serve, is currently experiencing technical difficulties. Until further notice, all persons seeking to file and serve with either the Supreme Court or the Superior Court must file and serve in accordance with the Commonwealth Rules of Practice and the Commonwealth Rules for Electronic Filing and Service. For more information, please contact the following individuals:

Gretchen A. Smith, Clerk of Court, CNMI Supreme Court, at (670) 236-9715 or email gretchen.smith@nmijudiciary.com; or Patrick V. Diaz, Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court at (670) 235-5248 or email patrick.diaz@nmijudiciary.com. (PR)

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**IT&E**



# Man who beat up wife over a bouquet pleads guilty

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
kimberly\_bautista@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A man who allegedly beat his common-law wife for catching a bouquet thrown by a bride during a wedding party that they had at-

tended pleaded guilty last Monday.

Christopher M. Wabol, 42, pleaded guilty last Monday to assault and battery (domestic violence) before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

Pursuant to the plea agreement,

Wabol would be sentenced to one year in prison, all suspended, and given credit for the five days he has already served.

Camacho scheduled Wabol's sentencing hearing for June 26 at 9am.

According to *Saipan Tribune*

archives, Wabol was originally arrested for assault and battery-domestic violence, and disturbing the peace.

Police said the victim had bruises on the left side of her face and a small cut inside her lower lip.

According to police detective Eugene O. Dillay, preliminary investigation showed that Wabol and his live-in partner had just attended a wedding party in Kagman III when the alleged beating happened.

At the wedding, Wabol reportedly got mad at his partner for catching the bouquet thrown by the bride. (It's a customary idea that the girl who catches the bride's bouquet will be the next one who will get married).

Wabol allegedly called his wife

to their car, where he allegedly punched her repeatedly in the face.

The victim told police that she, Wabol, and their 6-year-old daughter left the wedding shortly after.

The victim said when they arrived home, Wabol continued beating her. She said she was still in the passenger seat of the car when Wabol pulled her out. As she was walking to the front door of their house, Wabol allegedly lifted her from behind, slammed her to the ground, and began beating her.

She said their daughter, who was inside the car, witnessed the beating.

The victim said Wabol punched her repeatedly on the left side of her face and upper left chest, causing injuries.

## HOUSE

From Page 1

Senate for action.

Those who voted "no" were Reps. Joseph "Lee Pan" Guerrero (R-Saipan), Sheila Babauta (Ind-Saipan), Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), and Richard Lizama (Ind-Saipan).

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) was not present during the voting as he had to leave early. Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan) was absent.

In a later interview, Rep. John Paul Sablan said that H.B. 21-104, a working document with the Division of Customs, was heard for the past two sessions, during which lawmakers heard comments from the business community.

Sablan said many of those comments of the business community were also heard yesterday morning during the session, which is why they made amendments to the bill to address the concerns that businesses have. That includes inserting a provision that gives the Customs director or his or her designee the discretion to work with businesses, especially in these very trying times. He said that when businesses need more time to pay their taxes, they should appeal to the Customs director and explain the hardships.

"And that goes to any businesses," he added.

Sablan said that part of the intent of the bill is to deter fly-by-night operators that import goods here. Once these fly-by-night businesses get their goods, they could no longer be found after 30 days, he said.

As for the concern of other low-risk business that need more time to pay their excise tax, Sablan said this is why they inserted a provision that gives the Customs director discretionary powers, "because the director deals with these people on a daily basis."

"If, for example, Joeten needs the 30 days for them to pay the excise tax, what they need to do is appeal to the director and express the reasons behind the need to continue the 30-day grace period," he said.

For businesses that are just here for a short time—for example, just to erect one building—Rep. John Paul Sablan said the government has to start taking the taxes upon Customs clearance.

He said the final version of his bill has a provision to give the discretion to the Customs director if any business needs more time to pay its tax. He said that provision wasn't in the original bill. "That provision can still allow you to pay after 30 days," he said.

Sablan explained that he put in that provision for those who would be impacted most in these trying times.

Speaking for J.C. Tenorio Enterprises Inc., Clarence P. Tenorio said they oppose the original version of the bill from a practical standpoint. Reducing the time required to pay the excise tax is unreasonable for companies that receive containers and packages through the ports on a rolling basis, he said.

Tenorio said this bill will require their businesses to rush daily operation, inflicting an unnecessary burden on their receiving and accounting department to verify the shipments with invoices for discrepancies between invoices and shipments and issued checks to Customs.

By cutting out the grace period, the Legislature is essentially placing additional hardship on public needs at time when the people are feeling the pinch of the current crisis, Tenorio said.

Charles Cepeda, general manager of Pacific Trading Co., said that Customs director Jose C. Mafnas is doing an excellent job with Customs, but this bill needs scrutiny, especially about giving the director so much discretion.

Their worry is that there is no assurance that the next Customs direc-

tor would be like Mafnas, he said.

"I support it for as long as he [Mafnas] is the director, but I don't know about the next one," he said.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce executive director Maxine Laszlo said they oppose the passage of the bill until there is more talk among the Legislature, Customs, and businesses in order to get more input.

Mafnas said he understands there are some House members who are reluctant to support the bill as it touches on businesses or importers, while some are perhaps concerned that zeroing out the 30-day grace period is too drastic.

"I hope that after today, you will understand why I am so passionate to repeal the 30-day grace period for excise tax payment," he said.

Mafnas disclosed that, as of Tuesday, they have 111 importers that are over the 30-day grace period, with a total amount of \$120,000 that is due.

He said there are 468 importers that are 120 days overdue, with a total amount of \$192,000 due.

"Majority of these are the short-term and one-time importers," the director said.

Mafnas said there are 107 businesses that have closed their operations, with outstanding accounts totaling \$92,000.

"There are no contact numbers, no address, etc. In our books, we consider this as uncollectible," said Mafnas, adding that they have removed and continue to remove from their system many businesses/importers that are over the statute of limitation.

Rep. Sheila Babauta wants a public hearing on the bill first, saying she wants to hear more recommendations and concerns from the businesses community.

She encouraged House members to listen to the comments of the business community and not rush this bill. In these hard times, the CNMI is heavily reliant on the business community, Babauta said.

really isn't anything we can do to bargain for lower fuel prices on island," he said.

Taking into consideration the islands' current economic state as a result of losing tourists to the novel coronavirus outbreak, he said it would benefit him and other members of the community.

"However, I do suspect a very minute benefit in lowering the gas prices—maybe [I can] squeeze in one more trip to Garapan from my house in Gualo Rai with the new gas prices," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* ar-

chives, the Torres-Palacios administration announced on Feb. 7 another round of austerity measures that will cut the regular 80 work hours of government employees to 64 hours, starting on March 15. The move blames the coronavirus outbreak and the residual effects of Super Typhoon Yutu.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said this coronavirus outbreak has essentially brought the CNMI's tourism industry to a standstill for an undetermined period, causing a severe disruption in revenue and affecting many CNMI businesses and residents.

## FOOD STAMP

From Page 1

have been or will be made eligible by the government's austerity regime will consider looking into NAP assistance while going through a hard time.

NAP administrator Walter Macaranas recommends that government employees submit their application or come in for assistance in the latter part of March since austerity measures will be implemented that month.

"We want to offer this service so that they [applicants] won't come in here and put in so much effort into doing all these requirements, only to find out that they're not eligible," said Macaranas.

For eligible and ineligible adult head of the household, the citizenship criterion requires the adult head of the household to meet the following: U.S. citizen, U.S. national, lawfully admitted permanent residents (green card holders), an alien granted asylum under the immigration and Nationality Act, a refugee who is admitted to the United States, and certain aliens whose deportation is being withheld.

The types of income for eligible adult heads of household are separated into two brackets: earned income and unearned income. Earned income are wages and salaries, self-employment, and training allowance from vocational and rehabilitative programs. Unearned incomes are public assistance payments, annuities, pensions, retirement, veterans or disability benefits, income of eligible or disqualified household members, survivor's or social security benefits, support or alimony payments, child support payments, dividends, interest or royalties, gambling winnings, and lottery winnings.

To check for your gross monthly income obtained from wages and salaries that are based on a biweekly pay, you should collect your three most recent check stubs and find the average. For example, if your recent check stubs are \$580, \$623.50, and \$667, you should add it all together and divide the total

amount by three. The total would come out as \$1,870.50. Divide it by three and it will result in \$623.50. For your monthly gross pay, you multiply \$623.50 by your biweekly computation rate, which would be 2.15. Your monthly gross pay multiplied by 2.15 would come out as \$1,340.53.

Once you get your monthly gross pay, you can compare your monthly gross pay with the gross limit for your household size. If the gross monthly income is equal to or less than the gross limit, then you would meet the income criteria.

How is a benefit level determined for households with earned incomes? For example, if your household is the size of four on Saipan, and your monthly gross pay is \$1,340.53, you would take away 10% of your earned income, which would equal to \$1,206 and then multiply 30% of your food budget, which is how much you would essentially spend on food for your family, and your overall total will be \$362. Next, you would check the household size of a family of four for Saipan. That would be \$944. Now you subtract your food budget of \$362 from \$944, and you will get \$582. The \$582 will be your monthly income for food stamps.

If you are an ineligible adult head of the household, you would not need to deducted 10% of your earned income. For example, if your monthly gross pay is \$670.27, you would take 30% of your food budget which would be \$201. If you are a household of four but the head of the household and the spouse aren't U.S. citizens but the other two in the household are U.S. citizens, your household would be considered as a household of two. Since the household of two people is \$519, then you would take away \$201 from \$519 and it would be \$318. The \$318 would be your monthly income for food stamps.

Note that the income eligibility standards, type of resources and resource limits, and maximum monthly benefit allotment have not changed since last Jan. 2020.

For more information, check the NAP Facebook page or call (670)237-2800.

## GAS

From Page 1

preme fuel price went down from \$4.589 a gallon to \$4.489. Diesel fuel prices also saw a 10-cent decrease, from \$4.519 per gallon to \$4.419 per gallon.

According to an individual who requested anonymity, he was only aware that gas prices had been lowered last Tuesday, nearly a week after.

"I honestly didn't know about the gas price adjustments until I was told about it last Tuesday. However, there



# Novel coronavirus now officially called COVID-19

By JUSTINE NAUTA  
justine\_nauta@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

From a temporary name of 2019-nCoV, the novel coronavirus is now officially designated as COVID-19.

The World Health Organization gave the virus its official designation last Feb. 11.

The first three letters, "COV," comes from coronavirus, the "D" stands for disease, and the 19 stands for 2019, the year the virus was first identified, which was last December.

According to an online article in The Hill, WHO officials said that the agency wanted to avoid a name that refers to geographical locations, animals, or groups of people to avoid classifying a country or individual group of people. The coronavirus was previously referred to as 2019-nCoV, and some would call it the "Wuhan virus," a city in China where the illness originated.

In addition to the name change, WHO reported last Feb. 11 that there are now 42,708 confirmed cases in China, and 1,017 people have died from the virus. Meanwhile, there are 393 cases in 24 other countries, with one death outside China.

WHO will soon be hosting a conference of more than 400 scientists from around the world, in person and virtu-

ally, to talk about controlling the outbreak.

Since the virus outbreak first came up, there have

been many rumors about suspected cases of COVID-19 in the CNMI but the Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

has consistently denied this, making clear that there are no confirmed cases here. It has submitted a specimen for test-

ing to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention laboratory in Atlanta, Georgia last Feb. 11 but this does not mean that the CNMI has a confirmed case. CHCC stated that this patient does not meet

the full coronavirus case definition, but they are still taking precautionary orders in order to protect the CNMI.

CHCC will provide further updates on this case when it becomes available.

2 0 2 0

# LOCAL PROMOTION

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# NMC CREES gains regional and national recognitions

The University of Hawaii's Pacific Business Center Program recently named Northern Marianas College's interim dean for the Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services Patricia Coleman as a "Rising Star of Oceania."

The Stars of Oceania Award is given to those based on individual service and/or organizational contribution to Oceania and the world. Recipients are also selected from recommendations by the Stars of Oceania founders and members of the Global Breadfruit Summit Ohana (family).

In addition to receiving the award in Hawaii, Coleman was again presented the award by Dr. Craig Elevitch, Global Agroforestry expert, at the recent Agroforestry Workshop held at Kanoa Resort on Saipan.

"This would not have been possible without the hard-working team at CREES and our collaborative partners," Coleman said. "The work continues as we strive to enhance



The Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services team poses for a group photo. For more information on the work that NMC-CREES does, visit [crees.marianas.edu](http://crees.marianas.edu).

NMC

the CNMI's ability to produce nutritious food for local consumption using methods that regenerate the environment."

Coleman and Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, program leader at CREES, were also awarded the U.S. Department of Agri-

culture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture Partnership Award for Integrated Research, Extension, and Education for their work with the Children's Healthy Living Program. Coleman was invited to be an honoree at the USDA NIFA ceremony with expenses covered by NIFA but was unable to attend due to Super Typhoon Yutu recovery work at NMC.

In addition to strong partnership linkages, CHL was acknowledged for reducing young child overweight and obesity by 4% in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific, which includes Alaska, American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The study results were published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

tion Network Open.

The Children's Healthy Living Program has authored 36 scientific publications, 33 extension publications, 30 academic presentations and posters, and continues to build regional capacity in food, nutrition, public health, research, and evaluation methods. NMC CREES is currently conducting a follow-up study with a \$280,000 competitive research grant to determine if the effect of the 4% reduction in child overweight and obesity has been maintained.

NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said that this is also a great achievement for the college and the CREES program.

"Patricia and her team do an amazing job with our agricultural and nutrition programs,

so it's great to see them be recognized for it," Eliptico said.

NMC-CREES provides research and technical advice in the fields of agriculture, aquaculture, natural resources, community and youth development, health, and nutrition that is locally sustainable, environmentally safe, and economically feasible, in order to enhance the well-being and improve the quality of life of

the people living in the CNMI.

The four major programs in CREES are Aquaculture & Natural Resources, Agriculture Production, Family, Community, and Youth Development, and Nutrition & Health. Funding is provided by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

For more information on NMC-CREES, call 237-6840 or visit [crees.marianas.edu](http://crees.marianas.edu). (PR)

## Guam ready to receive coronavirus test kits

The virus now has a name.

The World Health Organization announced on Feb. 11 that the official name for the 2019 novel coronavirus is COVID-19. It was temporarily named 2019-nCoV.

As of 1:30pm yesterday, the immediate health risk of the novel coronavirus to the public remains low. Guam is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed a new laboratory kit that tests patient specimens for 2019-nCoV and began shipping these kits to U.S. domestic and select international laboratories.

Guam's Department of Public Health and Social Services received confirmation from U.S. CDC that the 2019-nCoV test kits will be shipped to Guam and arriving within two weeks.

In preparation for the coronavirus testing, the calibration of laboratory equipment at the Guam Public Health Laboratory at Ran-Care Building in Tamuning was completed. Currently, all testing for 2019-nCoV is being done at the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia until the new test kits arrive on island.

"Once DPHSS receives the novel coronavirus test kits, the GPHL can conduct the testing locally in lieu of sending the specimen off-island for testing," said DPHSS director Linda Unpingco De-Norcery. (PR)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-CDA-060**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 16, 2020 TIME: 09:30 A.M.**

**"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "I" SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE (SUV) FOR THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ MANUEL A. SABLAN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CDA

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
RFP NO.: RFP20-OGM-059**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2020 TIME: 09:30 A.M.**

**"STANDALONE PHOTOVOLTAIC LIGHT SYSTEM FOR THE COCONUT RHINO (CRB) PROGRAM FOR ROTA FOR THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARING HOUSE"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A **MANDATORY PROJECT SITE VISIT & PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING** IS SCHEDULED ON **10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME, MARCH 03, 2020** AT THE ROTA-DLNR CONFERENCE ROOM (ON ROTA).

**QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO **MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR., ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA E-MAIL TO [epi.cabrera@gov.mp](mailto:epi.cabrera@gov.mp) **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS 04:30 P.M., MARCH 05, 2020.**

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.**  
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**COMMONWEALTH PORTS  
AUTHORITY**

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT,  
2ND Floor Arrival Bldg.  
PO BOX 50155, SAIPAN, MP 96950  
Phone: (1-870) 237-6800 / Fax: (1-870) 234-5962  
E-Mail Address: [cpa.adm@pibcom.com](mailto:cpa.adm@pibcom.com) Website: [www.cpa.gu.mp](http://www.cpa.gu.mp)

**NOTICE OF  
EMERGENCY MEETING**

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special emergency meeting is being called on Friday, February 14, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom at the Airport Fire Station located at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on the island of Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

**AGENDA**

- PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
  - Call to Order
  - Roll Call
  - Adoption of Agenda
  - Adoption of Minutes (January 30, 2020)
- PUBLIC COMMENT(S)**
- SPECIAL MEETING ITEM:**
  - Resolution No. 02-2020: Austerity Measures
- EXECUTIVE SESSION (If needed)**
- MISCELLANEOUS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- ADJOURNMENT**

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items.

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS  
Chairwoman,  
Board of Directors

February 12, 2020

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-DLNR/DFW-055**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 04, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.**

**NEW RIDING MOWER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE UNDER SMILING COVE MARINA OPERATION & MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ ANTHONY T. BENAVENTE**  
SECRETARY, DLNR

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT  
INVITATION TO BID  
ITB NO.: ITB20-HSEM-058**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 16, 2020 TIME: 09:00 A.M.**

**"PURCHASE, DELIVERY, & INSTALLATION OF CNMI ALL HAZARDS MASS WARNING ALERT AT THREE (3) PRE-IDENTIFIED SITES ON SAIPAN FOR THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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**/S/ GERALD J. DELOEN GUERRERO**  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT, HSEM

**/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



# Overstaying tourist found guilty

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
kimberly\_bautista@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

An overstaying Chinese tourist who allegedly lied to a federal agent was found guilty last Monday following his jury trial.

Xinzhou Ren was unanimously found guilty of lying to a federal agency last Monday at the U.S. District Court for the NMI. He will be sentenced on June 4 at 9am.

According to Saipan Tribune archives, Ren was arrested for allegedly lying to a federal agent that he had fled China because of fear that he would be persecuted or harmed due to his religious affiliation. Ren later admitted to a federal agent that he did not have such fear and was, in fact, staying in the CNMI for other reasons.

DHS Homeland Security Investigations special agent Nicole Sively stated in her affidavit in support of the criminal complaint that during an administrative interview on

May 13, 2019, Ren stated that he told immigration officers at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport that he was on Saipan as a visitor. Sively said that, according to Ren, he used that as an excuse because he wanted to escape China. Ren stated that he was wanted by the police in Hebei Province, China, in 2015. Ren also allegedly stated that he left China because his government persecuted him due to his religion. The defendant stated he feared he would be harmed if he returns to China.

Sively said Ren later admitted he did not have such fear and was staying in the CNMI for other reasons. Sively said Ren was then released from HSI custody and scheduled for service of immigration documents at a later date.

Ren then presented himself at the Enforcement and Removal Operations Office on Saipan, requesting the return of his passport and presenting a copy of his passport and an itinerary with booking infor-

mation for a flight to China.

Sively said she requested that Ren report back to the HSI Office where he presented the HSI personnel with a copy of his passport, a receipt in the amount of \$535, and an itinerary for departure from Saipan.

Ren also provided the HSI personnel with a sworn statement confirming that he had told Sively that he fled China because of fear that he would be persecuted or harmed due to his religious affiliation.

Sively said Ren told her that he no longer wished to "claim asylum" and wanted to return to China. Ren was then arrested.

## US Navy awards Japan-funded contract to build 2 Marine Corps dorms in Guam

**JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM**—Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific awarded yesterday a \$204 million firm-fixed price contract to Caddell-Nan, a joint venture in Montgomery, Ala., for the construction of two bachelor enlisted quarters complexes at Marine Corps Base Guam.

The contract supports the Defense Policy Review Initiative and is funded by the Japanese government as part of an international agreement with the United States.

"The award of these projects is a tangible symbol of progress as the Marine Corps prepares to relocate forces from Okinawa to Guam in the first half of the 2020s," said Marine Corps Activity Guam deputy officer in charge Donald Baldwin.

The work to be performed includes, but is not limited to, two six-story BEQ building complexes with shallow spread footing foundations and reinforced concrete walls, framing, and roof. Each BEQ complex consists of a BEQ tower; a community core building that in-

cludes laundry facilities, a duty office and bunk room, vending machine area, multipurpose room, public restrooms, and a multi-function room; a utility building housing an emergency generator, fire pump, HVAC equipment, and a wash down and drying area.

The BEQ towers provide 300 rooms for unaccompanied E1-E5 personnel and include vestibules, elevators, mechanical/electrical rooms, janitor closets, telephone/communication rooms, and an attic.

"The Office in Charge of Construction Marine Corps Marianas is ready and energized to begin construction of the first major buildings situated on Camp Blaz," said OICC MCM commanding officer Capt. Joe Greeson. "The award of this contract signifies not only our commitment to force relocation, but also represents the hard work of many dedicated professionals in preparing the site for construction."

Work will be performed in Guam and is expected to be completed by September 2023. (PR)

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### BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A very blessed happy birthday greeting goes out to Kristy. May your special day be filled with lots of love and laughter. We love you! Greeting comes from Kaylie.

# HIPHOP PARTY SAIPAN

# FESTIVAL

K-POP · Korea B-boying · RAP ·

Entrance fee is free

2/17/2020 (Mon)

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Juice and snacks will be sold on spot



사이판 한국 문화원  
Saipan Korea Cultural Center





## Homemade boat race, more at Tinian Hot Pepper Fest



FILE—Competitors in the JC Café Pika Burger Eating Contest take their first bites at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019. The Marianas Visitors Authority and co-sponsor Tinian Mayor's Office will hold the 16th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 15-16, 2020, at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose village on Tinian, adjacent to Kammer Beach.

MVA

A full weekend of games and competitions are set for the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 15-16, 2020, including a homemade boat race.

The festival will begin on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 2-11pm with food sales and live entertainment. Activities on Saturday include the 65K Pika Bike Race (6:30am), Pike Bike Race Awards (2pm), official opening ceremony (5pm), Tinian Jr./Sr. High JROTC presentation (5:30pm), Female Hot Pepper Eating Contest (5:40pm), The Originals (6pm), Tunadas Singers (6:15pm), Tao Tao Taga Cultural Dancers (7:15pm), Smarty Swag Dancers (7:45pm), solo performances by Jonilla Manuel, Nikki Manglona, and Letricia (8pm), Fit Beat Dancers (8:15pm), Tubera Siblings (8:45pm), Olei's Band (9:30pm), Pacific Cool (10pm), and Marvin & Jay (10:30pm).

The festival will continue Sunday, Feb. 16, from 11am to 11pm. Activities on Sunday include Estafao Pika Cooking Contest and E&J Band (11am), Costume Contest, Joe Sablan,

and Olei's Band (12pm), "Umang" (hermit crab) Race for boys and girls (2:45pm), Tug of War (3:15pm), Sack Race (3:45pm), JC Pikalicious Burger Eating Contest (4:15pm), The Originals (4:45pm), solo performances by Jonilla Manuel, Nikki Manglona, and Letricia (5pm), Male Hot Pepper Eating Contest (5:15pm), Tubera Siblings (5:45pm), Fit Beat Dancers (6:15pm), Saipan Music & Dance School (6:45pm), Smarty Swag (7:30pm), Olei's Band (7:45pm), Chacha Dance Competition with Marvin Deleon Guerrero (8:45pm), and Pacific Cool (10am).

Entries in Sunday's Costume Contest must be crafted of natural or recycled material and have a hot pepper theme. Costumes must be worn and will be judged based on creativity/attractiveness, adherence to theme, and effort exerted.

Activities will be highlighted on Sunday with a homemade boat race from 12pm to 2pm, featuring boats made on Tinian by local businesses, government offices, and

families.

The program lineup is subject to change.

On Feb. 15 and 16, Star Marianas Air will be extending their flight service between Saipan and Tinian until 10:30pm for customers with advance booking. Passengers interested in flying during these extended hours should call Star Marianas reservations department at (670) 433-9996 / 9996 to make a booking.

"We're very excited about this year's Pika Festival," said Star Marianas Air's general manager Donna Cabrera said. "We hope our neighbors on Saipan will take advantage of our extended hours to enjoy the great entertainment, games and food being offered even if they don't plan to spend the night on Tinian."

The Marianas Visitors Authority's ferry service between Tinian and Saipan on Feb. 14-17 is sold out.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose, Tinian, adjacent to Jones Beach. This year's major sponsor is IT&E. Additional sponsors include

Saipan World Resort, Saipan Shipping Co., and JC Café.

The festival, affectionately known as "Pika Fest" among locals (*pika* means spicy), pays homage to Tinian's small but famous *donne Sali* hot pepper. Activities will include dances, bands, and other live entertainment; cooking competitions, indigenous craft sales; and more. Festivalgoers will have the chance to purchase a variety of local dishes, join the *umang* (hermit crab) races, participate in sports activities,

and join the hot pepper eating competition, itself.

Airport shuttle will be offered by the MVA to and from the festival site by calling

287-0479. Accommodations are available at Tinian Ocean View, Lorilynn's Hotel, Tinian Street Motel, Fleming Hotel, Green Lion House Hotel, and the Marpo Valley Inn. Free camping is available at Kammer Beach, Taga Beach (toilets, barbecue pits, and outdoor showers available) and at the adjacent Tachogna Beach

(toilets, barbecue pits, and indoor showers available).

To register for the 65K Pika Bike Race or for more information, contact Dawn Sarmiento at dawnsarmiento@yahoo.com or Alex Gozon at alexgozon@yahoo.com.

For more information, contact Tinian field operations supervisor Vida Borja at 433-9365 or email at vborja@mymarianas.com or MVA community project specialist Ray Villagomez at 664-3210 or rvillagomez@mymarianas.com. (PR)

## Japan's Marine Diving Magazine to tout Saipan sites



A photographer from Japan's *Marine Diving Magazine* visits Obyan Beach on Feb. 3, 2020, to prepare for a feature on the Marianas in March 2020.

MVA

Japan's *Marine Diving Magazine* was in the Marianas last week gathering images and information for an upcoming feature on Saipan.

The magazine circulates 100,000 copies each month, targeting divers of all ages in Japan. Their upcoming feature on March 10 will highlight the convenience of making multiple dives on a four-day trip to Saipan,

which has directly daily flight service from Tokyo by Skymark Airlines.

"The Marianas has been a regular feature of *Marine Diving Magazine*, and we are pleased to have had them back this month for another article," said Marianas Visitor Authority marketing manager Thomas Kim. "At this time of reduced flights to the Marianas from China,

we are hoping to entice more visitors from Japan, and this article will help."

The estimated ad value of the magazine's coverage is \$100,000.

In addition to visiting numerous dive sites from Feb. 2 to 6, the editorial team visited Cha Café & Bistro and Marianas Creations and lodged at Serenti Hotel Saipan. (MVA)

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

### February 13, 2001

#### Bank assets soar 27 percent in 4Q

The need for additional financing by local businesses paved the road for a significant increase in banking activities in the Northern Marianas, with bank assets growing 27 percent and liabilities modestly dropping by 1.3 percent by end-December 2000. A report from the Banking and Insurance Division of the commerce department disclosed outstanding loans soared 27 percent to \$325 million in the last quarter of the calendar year 2000 from the previous period's \$255.7 million. This, as liabilities dropped 1.3 per-

cent to \$596 million from the last quarter's \$604 million as bank clients see lesser need to save on savings and commercial deposits due to increased activities in the tourism industry.

#### Travel agents deployed to promote NMI tourism

In a last-ditch effort to help the Commonwealth lure tourists from Taipei, Mandarin Airlines has deployed at least 150 travel agents to increase awareness of Taiwanese travelers about the Northern Marianas as a destination. Mandarin Airlines Saipan Station Manager Charlie Ling disclosed that the carrier has

beefed up efforts in hopes that regular flights between Taipei and Saipan will continue despite revenue losses in the past months. These travel agents were asked to discuss various travel packages with different agencies in the Asian country who, in return, will be promoting Commonwealth tour packages to Taiwan travelers.

### February 13, 2005

#### Betel nut tree fungus resurfaces

The fungus *Phytophthora meadii*, which causes the Betel Nut Bud Rot Disease, has resurfaced and has already killed over 150 betel nut trees. According to agricultural consultant Isidoro T. Cabrera of the Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service, the disease has already affected trees in an area in Papago and two areas in Capitol Hill. Cabrera discovered the

spread Friday during a survey around the island "An estimated 100 trees were dying or are already dead in Papago, and over 50 on Capitol Hill," Cabrera said during an interview yesterday.

#### Affairs of the heart and other places

Amber Lynn Rosario Mendiola was born with a congenital heart defect. She has had heart surgeries since birth until last summer. A freshman high school student at MHS, Amber is a teenager who lives daily at the edge of her finitude. But her heart vibrates valentine vocals this season. Getting airtime from two local radio stations, on the hour every hour last week, Amber is singing her heart out with sentiments that range from the pain of friendships falling apart to the peppy heartbeat of teenage love and youthful exuberance. Amber applied and was granted by

the Guam-based Make a Wish Foundation the chance to record her songs.

### February 13, 2006

#### Saipan churches, groups unite for dead pastor

At least 15 local churches and 16 groups and individuals joined hands in helping repatriate the remains of the late God's Victorious Army pastor Augusto "Boy" Felia to the Philippines. Felia's remains reached his hometown in Romblon, the Philippines Friday last week. Immanuel Methodist Church pastor Jimmy Sembrano confirmed yesterday that the late pastor is with his family now. Felia will be interred in his hometown next week. Sembrano said church mate and officer Brendon Perez and senior pastor Danny Ibanez escorted Felia's remains home. Both are expected to return to

Saipan today.

#### Police recover stolen disaster relief supplies

Police have recovered most of the 63 boxes of disaster relief supplies worth \$54,000 that were stolen during a burglary at the Emergency Management Office's storage room, police said yesterday. Maj. Edward H. Manalili, chief of the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Investigation Bureau, told the Saipan Tribune that CIB detectives were able to retrieve many of the disaster relief packages since last week. Manalili said some concerned citizens also returned many items contained in the packages yesterday morning. "The concerned citizens just came forward to turn over the items after reading the articles [about the break-in]," the CIB chief said, adding that they also received many tips since the Saipan Tribune broke the story.



# AYD pays workers \$30K after USDOL finds OT violations

**HONOLULU, Hawaii**—After an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, AYD Services Inc.—a Saipan-based provider of environmental and waste collection services—has paid \$30,077 in back wages and liquidated damages to 21 employees for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime requirements. The employer also paid \$17,976 in civil penalties as a repeat and willful violator of the FLSA's wage standards.

WHD investigators found the employer illegally entered into agreements with workers to waive their rights to earn overtime pay when they

worked beyond 40 hours in a workweek. By doing so, the employer paid workers at their straight-time rates regardless of the number of hours they worked in a workweek, triggering overtime violations when those hours exceeded 40. Previous investigations of AYD Services Inc. revealed minimum wage and overtime violations.

"Employers cannot enter into agreements with workers to waive their rights under federal law," said Wage and Hour district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu, Hawaii. "We will continue to enforce the law so all employers abide by the same rules and compete

on a level playing field. We also encourage employers and employees to call us for assistance to improve their understanding of the labor standards and learn about our online educational tools, so violations like those found in this investigation can be avoided."

The department offers numerous resources to ensure employers have the tools they need to understand their responsibilities and to comply with federal law, such as online videos, confidential calls, or in-person visits to local WHD offices.

For more information about the FLSA and other laws

enforced by the Wage and Hour Division, contact the toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Employ-

ers who discover overtime or minimum wage violations may self-report and resolve those violations without

litigation through the PAID program. Information is also available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd>. (PR)

## One of six alleged 'ice' traffickers pleads guilty

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
kimberly\_bautista@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

One of the six men suspected of drug trafficking pleaded guilty last Monday.

Shou Fu Zhang, 33, pleaded guilty during a change of plea hearing last Monday before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

Zhang pleaded guilty to a count of illegal possession of controlled substance, which is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, and a fine of over \$2000.

By pleading guilty, Zhang would be sentenced to five years imprisonment with two year suspended. However, the sentence would still be decided at his sentencing hearing set for June 26.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Zhang was arrested in November 2019, along with other alleged meth-

amphetamine or "ice" traffickers, including Joshua Sablan Diaz, 34; Song Joon Park, 41; Li Hui Shi, 41; Yi Chuan Bai, 33; and In Jun Cho, 38. Each one was arrested in separate CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force operations.

In Zhang's case, DETF said their "cooperating source" managed to buy \$600 worth of "ice" from Zhang last Oct. 2, 2019, near a store in Chalan Piao.

In the second operation, the "cooperating source" was able to buy \$450 worth of "ice" from Zhang last Oct. 16, 2019, near a bank in Garapan.

In the case of Diaz, a DETF "cooperating source" managed to buy \$350 worth of methamphetamine from him at his home in Chalan Kiya on Sept. 23, 2019. That was allegedly repeated last Oct. 5, 2019, when the "cooperating source" bought \$100 worth of

methamphetamine from Diaz at his home.

In the case against Park and his girlfriend, Shi, DETF said their "cooperating source" bought \$550 worth of "ice" from the two during a sting operation last Oct. 25, 2019, at their home in Dandan. The "cooperating source" was allegedly able to buy again \$540 worth "ice" from the two last Oct. 28, 2019.

In Bai's case, DETF said that it was Bai who delivered the drugs to Park and Shi at the Oct. 25 and 28 sting operations.

In the case against Cho, DETF said their "cooperating source" was able to buy \$100 worth of "ice" from the defendant at his house in Garapan last Sept. 18, 2019. DETF said the "cooperating source" was again able to buy \$100 worth of "ice" from Cho at his residence last Nov. 19, 2019.

## ERRATUM

The caption in this photo that was published on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, incorrectly identified the honor guard as Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets. They are, in fact, soldiers with the U.S. Army Reserve. Our apologies for the error.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## Trump budget proposes \$619M for territories, FAS

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—U.S. President Donald J. Trump has proposed \$619 million for the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs fiscal year 2021 budget for the benefit of fellow Americans in the U.S. territories of American Samoa, the CNMI, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The proposal also includes funding for U.S. allies in the Pacific who have a Compact of Free Association with the United States—the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The

OIA budget proposal includes \$89.2 million in current appropriations and \$530.0 million in permanent funding.

"The 2021 budget request prioritizes the department's mission to fulfill our insular area responsibilities in the Pacific as well as in the Caribbean," said Douglas W. Domenech, assistant secretary of the Interior, Insular and International Affairs. "This funding request exemplifies President Trump and Secretary [David] Bernhardt's continued support for the U.S. territories and the freely associated states."

For a list of accomplish-

ments and actions demonstrating the administration's strong commitment to the U.S. insular areas in 2019, visit: <https://www.doi.gov/oia/press/interior-assistant-secretary-releases-2019-accomplishments-offices-insular-and>.

The Department of the Interior's fiscal year 2021 Budget in Brief is available online at: <https://www.doi.gov/budget/appropriations/2020/highlights>.

For more information about the work of the OIA, visit [www.doi.gov/oia](http://www.doi.gov/oia) or follow on Twitter @ASIID-domenech. (PR)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
RFP NO.: RFP20-OGM-052**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 13, 2020 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

**"INSTALLATION OF SOLAR LIGHT  
SYSTEMS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS  
AND PATHWAYS IN TINIAN FOR  
THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO **MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR., ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA E-MAIL TO [epi.cabrera@gov.mp](mailto:epi.cabrera@gov.mp) **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS 04:30 P.M., FEBRUARY 24, 2020.**

A MANDATORY SITE VISIT AND PRE-BID MEETING IS SCHEDULED ON **FEBRUARY 20, 2020 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME** AT THE MUNICIPALITY OF TINIAN & AGUIGUAN CONFERENCE ROOM IN TINIAN.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.  
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
RFP NO.: RFP20-OGM-053**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 13, 2020 TIME: 9:30 A.M.

**"CNMI STRATEGIC ENERGY PLAN  
UPDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF  
GRANTS MANAGEMENT"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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A PRE-PROPOSAL IS SCHEDULED ON **FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME** AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.  
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY  
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
RFP NO.: RFP20-OGM-054**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 13, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"AQUAPONICS PROGRAM PHOTOVOLTIC  
SYSTEM (ROTA) FOR THE OFFICE  
OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT"**

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO **MR. EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR., ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA E-MAIL TO [epi.cabrera@gov.mp](mailto:epi.cabrera@gov.mp) **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS 04:30 P.M., FEBRUARY 28, 2020.**

A MANDATORY SITE VISIT AND PRE-BID MEETING IS SCHEDULED ON **FEBRUARY 27, 2020 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME** AT THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROTA CONFERENCE ROOM, SINAPALO (ROTA).

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.  
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## The impeachment trial is over. So is the Senate's excuse for inaction on guns

Throughout the impeachment inquiry and trial of President Donald Trump, Republicans argued that the proceedings were interrupting legislative work. Rep. Guy Reschenthaler, who represents a southwestern part of Pennsylvania, said in December that instead of holding impeachment hearings, Congress should work to lower prescription drug prices. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), admonished Democrats for wasting an "entire calendar year."

This argument was never strong. The impeachment process did not prevent the House and Senate from passing the United State-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a trade deal. When the issue is important to President Trump, Congress finds the capacity to walk and chew gum. Now that the impeachment trial is over, so is one of the last excuses for inaction—even on those issues less dear to the president.

Even in this highly polarized political moment, there are issues that both parties should be able to work on together. It might surprise some observers that one of those issues is gun control.

A year ago, the House passed two bills to broaden federal background check requirements to all private sellers and extend the period of time that a background check can take. In the six months between the passage of the bills and Speaker Nancy Pelosi's announcement of the impeachment inquiry, neither bill got a single hearing or vote in the Senate. According to McConnell, the bills won't get a vote in the Senate as long as Trump doesn't indicate that he would sign them.

Not all Republicans oppose the legislation, and Pennsylvanians can lead the way. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, from Bucks County, was among a few Republicans who voted for both House bills. Almost all other Republicans fell in line with the National Rifle Association's position against any gun control measure. Senator Pat Toomey has advocated for a weaker background check bill for years—a bipartisan effort he is ready to revisit and believes the White House could get behind. Still if the Manchin-Toomey bill it would be the most significant piece of gun control in decades.

It is rare in the current political climate to find something a majority of Americans can agree on. Despite the conventional wisdom that gun control is a wedge issue, and despite the NRA's best efforts to maintain that status, universal background checks are extremely popular.

The vast majority of both parties support universal background checks—96% of Democrats and 83% of Republicans, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll from September. A 2015 survey by the American Center for Progress found that even 72% of National Rifle Association

See IMPEACHMENT on Next Page



## Another epidemic looms: 'yellow peril' racism

After an unexpected December trip to China's Hunan province to bury her father, a Renton, Wash., woman returned home on Feb. 2. The following day, her husband told me, the woman was confronted at her door by her condo property manager. The manager told her because she had traveled to China, she should leave her home and be quarantined.

On Feb. 4, flyers appeared in the entryway of her condo credited to condo management, headlined "Virus Quarantine" and alerting residents to a possible virus infection. The flyers advised people to wear face masks and gloves near her home. The woman, whom I'm not naming because she fears further discrimination, was not sick and under no official quarantine order or restriction, her husband said. Neighbors learned of her trip and decided to take matters into their own hands.

This incident is just one of many, as rumors, misinformation and fears about the novel coronavirus have flooded social media and news worldwide. Locally, Devin Israel Cabanilla's Asian American son was refused samples at an Issaquah Costco by a worker who expressed worry he was Chinese and had coronavirus because he was wearing a mask. The company has apologized. The Seattle Chinatown-International District Business Improvement Area said businesses reported sales taking a hit the past weeks, during Lunar New Year, usually their busiest time. Other local Lunar New Year celebrations have been canceled.

Many Asian Americans nationwide have reported discrimination due to the virus. From a flood of racist comments on social media about Chinese eating habits and other stereotypes, to a woman reportedly assaulted in New York for being Asian and wearing a face mask in the subway. University of California, Berkeley—to backlash and eventual apology—even issued an advisory to students saying that xenophobia was a normal reaction to virus fears. In France, discrimination against Asian French led to the creation of the hashtag #Jenesuispasunvirus, or "I am not a virus."

Let's take a collective breath.

Like any new virus, the unknowns about the novel coronavirus heighten our fears. The disease has infected more than 40,000 people, nearly all in China, and killed more than 900 as of Sunday. Eleven million people in the city of Wuhan, China, are locked down for the foreseeable future.

But in the U.S., unlike the flu, which has killed at least 8,000 people so far this season to much less widespread anxiety, the coronavirus has infected 12, with no deaths thus far. One American in Wuhan has died from the coronavirus.

We can't let our fear drive us to create a new "yellow peril" and perpetuate racist patterns of discrimination and scapegoating.

By NAOMI ISHISAKA

The Seattle Times

Naomi Ishisaka is a columnist for the Seattle Times.



Most if not all Asian Americans I know have experienced the harm of being treated as perpetually foreign in our own country. For me and many others, one of my first experiences in realizing our family was different was having friends come to our house and be aghast at the "gross" and "disgusting" Asian food my dad would always have around. I learned then and throughout my life that to be Asian American would always mean being treated as the other.

Conjoining "foreigners" with disease has a long history in the U.S. Fears of Chinese immigrants spreading disease provided key justification to drum up support for the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. The SARS outbreak in 2002 also led to widespread xenophobia and Sinophobia.

Discrimination and stigmatization don't just have a terrible psychological and social impact on their targets, they actually can make disease outbreaks worse, said Dr. Jeff Duchin, the public health officer for Public Health – Seattle & King County. Stigma makes it less likely people will seek treatment, which makes disease harder to control.

"We really don't want that first casualty to be common sense and good judgment in the way we treat one another in our communities," Duchin said. "We don't want to have an outbreak of panic when we don't even have an outbreak of disease (in Seattle) at the moment."

To help prevent discrimination, Public Health – Seattle & King County released a poster and at an event with Asian American community leaders on Friday that said, "Viruses don't discriminate, and neither should we."

This outbreak is a terrible human tragedy. We should not compound and exacerbate that tragedy by adding completely preventable bias into the mix.

As health officials work to stop the spread of the new coronavirus, the rest of us have the power to stop the spread of the virus of our own making—the one of misplaced fear, distrust and discrimination.



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## We should be able to talk about Kobe Bryant's rape case without receiving death threats

Two prominent female journalists were pummeled on social media, one was even suspended from her job. Both received death threats for having the audacity to mention a well-established rape charge against the late Kobe Bryant.

Just consider the irony of that for a moment. You thought we were in the #MeToo generation and that we had moved beyond the previously allowed, or rationalized, shaming of women who raised their voices against sexual assault or harassment of women.

Well, not so fast. The rules are clearly scrambled when the alleged abuser is a world-famous man whose death moved some of his fans to express their grief as anger, threats or condemnation of women who raised inconvenient truths about the NBA legend.

Felicia Sonmez of the Washington Post, a tremendous reporter who has said she was the victim of sexual misconduct, found herself in the crosshairs of Bryant avengers after tweeting a story documenting Bryant's past sexual transgressions on Jan. 26, the day he and eight others, including his daughter, died in a helicopter crash near Calabasas, Calif.

People vented their outrage at Sonmez on Twitter. She tried to respond: "To the 10,000 people (literally) who have commented and emailed me with abuse and death threats, please take a moment and read the story—which was written 3+ years ago, and not by me."

Sadly, she was placed on administrative leave by her employers even though it doesn't appear that she violated the social media guidelines of her publication by tweeting a story about Bryant. The justification of some of Bryant's avengers is that it was too soon. People were still processing Bryant's death.

**SNOOP DOGG, OPRAH WEIGH IN**

People I am "friends" with on Facebook, including members of the media, criticized Sonmez for being insensitive. In this case, what we used to call "the truth" is insensitive.

OK, so then there is obviously some unwritten rule relating to a cooling off period, a fortnight of mourning maybe, before

journalists are allowed to, you know, be journalists without fearing a penalty of death.

Well, apparently that unwritten moment of mourning has not elapsed. Because Gayle King, the well known CBS host, was also subjected to death threats for asking about Bryant's rape allegations on TV. In an interview with former WNBA star Lisa Leslie, she asked: "It's been said that his legacy is complicated because of a sexual assault charge which was dismissed in 2003, 2004. Is it complicated for you, as a woman, as a WNBA player?"

A simple question. A torrent of response, including condemnation from Snoop Dogg, with an Instagram post saying "Why are you all attacking us? We're your people." If you watch it, be warned that it does contain objectionable language.

It got so bad, and so many people were threatening to kill King, that her famous friend Oprah Winfrey felt the need to speak up for her.

"She is not doing well, because she has now death threats and has to now travel with security and she's feeling very much attacked," Winfrey said in an interview.

Well, I am not in the same league as Oprah, but as a journalist I feel the need to write this: Neither Sonmez nor King did anything wrong.

Journalists are supposed to ask tough questions. In writing about, tweeting about or asking about famous people who have died, their jobs are to convey the whole story to readers and viewers.

I did it the day that Bryant died. I mentioned it because it was my job to cover the death of a famous person and to provide my readers with the whole story so that they could process it.

**BRYANT'S ADMISSION ON CONSENT**

Bryant was credibly accused of rape in 2003. As the Daily Beast wrote, "It is impossible to read through the legal documents and not come away repulsed."

Bryant even admitted afterward in a statement that while he viewed his sexual encounter with a 19-year-old woman as con-

## Primary elections begin with a crash

This year's Iowa caucus could go down in history as illustrative of what happens when progressive Democrats are in charge. We had unintended consequences, confusion, undeserved shame for the state, TV cameras perplexed by the curtains not rising, presidential candidates wondering what they were supposed to do next and why they had campaigned so hard and spent so much money. Finally, after waiting around for days to see who won, the results were announced with ignored pleas by top Democratic officials that there had to be a recount.

Although it could be an alternate reality, it seems that presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg may be a fraction of a percentage point ahead of Bernie Sanders in the popular vote and that each one has at least 11 delegates. It is interesting that Sanders emerged reasonably well out of the chaos because he is a champion of chaos, someone who wants to dismantle essentials of

free enterprise, squeeze liberty to the point of being a flat tire, spend us into economic ruin and thereby win the hearts of the people.

His ambitions include scorching taxes, "Medicare for All" while Medicare is already in financial straits, a Green New Deal aiming to generate more change than the climate is capable of, and paying off mostly middle class student loan debt, meaning less government money will be available for the poor, a socialist sin. Sanders and his followers are mostly wedded to equality of monetary outcome even though it can only be achieved through coercion. They do not know that no economic system has ever benefitted humanity as much as capitalism. And the youthful Sanders supporters don't seem to get it that this elderly man with adolescent dreams has less common sense than President Donald Trump.

But wait, you might say. Pete Buttigieg also did really, really well in Iowa, and is a veteran, a Harvard and Oxford University grad and a moderate. Some of that's true, and there's no question that this 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Ind., is articulate and alert enough that his campaign workers figured out he had done well days before the caucus managers were announcing anything.

The day of the vote, he gave a victory speech about a new generation bringing about political unity under which inequities would disappear and America would thrive.

Understand, however, that he is not a moderate and flubbed the job in South Bend. Is it moderate to want to reshape the Supreme Court so that constitutionalists will lose their majority position? Is it moderate to want to replace the Electoral College with a system that would lessen the standing of less populous states in a union that aimed to ameliorate that issue? Do those of us who do not live on the East or West Coasts want them to

By **MARCOS BRETON**

The Sacramento Bee



*Marcos Breton writes commentary and opinion columns about the Sacramento region, California and the United States.*

sensual, the woman did not. Here is part of what he said: "After months of reviewing discovery, listening to her attorney, and even her testimony in person, I now understand how she feels that she did not consent to this encounter."

When a woman does not give consent, and sex happens anyway, what do they call that? In Bryant's case, his accuser backtracked after her reputation was smeared in the ensuing publicity surrounding the case.

Does the fact that two female journalists have been smeared for raising this undeniable past make you feel uncomfortable? It makes me feel uncomfortable for several reasons. I feel terribly for Sonmez and King. They didn't do anything wrong and, if you think they did, then you understand hero worship more than you understand the role of a free press.

I, too, felt the tragic loss Bryant, his daughter and others traveling with them. But what happened in Bryant's past actually happened. His rape case shouldn't define him, but it should be part of his story. And we're supposed to tell the full stories of famous people when they die.

Telling the full story is not insulting or disrespectful. It's honest.

In totalitarian countries, journalists can die for telling uncomfortable truths. The ability to tell such truths is what sets our country apart.

Or at least it did before too many people weaponized their hero worship and aimed at two women who raised awareness for one tarnished part of a legacy and were threatened for doing so. We should be aware of that, too.

By **JAY AMBROSE**

Tribune News Service



*Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at speaktojay@aol.com.*

rule us? And Buttigieg struggled to get along with his police department and some in the black community who felt they were victimized by police.

It's true that Buttigieg has modified his policy positions to the point of not being as extreme as Sanders or Sen. Elizabeth Warren, but he is still mostly racing down the same track, if at a slower pace. He does have some good ideas in my view, but I frankly doubt his leadership capacity, and a serious problem has been his inability to connect with black voters.

Buttigieg's success at the polls might have something to do with his having a chance to campaign heartily in Iowa while a number of the other candidates, being U.S. senators, were stuck in Washington impeachment proceedings. But fumbling Joe Biden also had the opportunity to scoot around the state to no benefit whatsoever. Some are saying he's in trouble now and are looking at billionaire Michael Bloomberg, former successful mayor of New York City, to be the real moderate, and, yes, he is less scary than Sanders, as are most politicians in the country.

Let's hope the next primary elections are conducted more smoothly than this last one and that the more sensible candidates do climb to the top.

**IMPEACHMENT**

From Page 10

members support background checks.

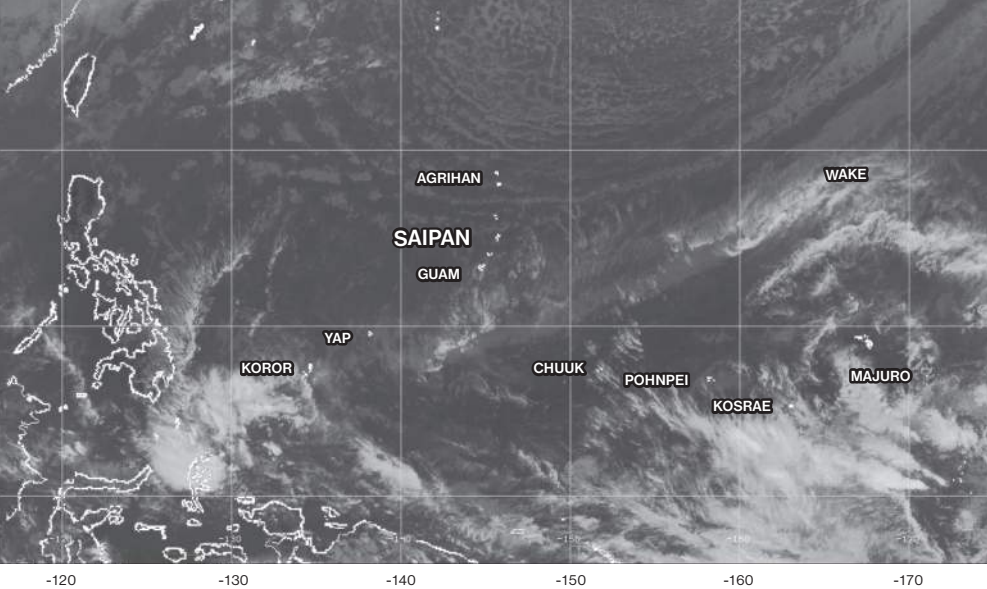
Between their popularity and their demonstrated effectiveness, there is no excuse not to enact a universal background check bill. Even if the measure alone is not a panacea to stop the bleeding in cities like Philadelphia with high rates of gun violence, it will prevent some of the violence and lay the foundation for future efforts to ensure that people who intend to use a gun on themselves, or on a member of their community, cannot buy a gun.

A gun control victory could also restore faith in Congress' ability to do its job, instead of just coming up with excuses.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
84°	75°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	75°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 7:33 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A dry mid-latitude air mass has established itself across the Marianas with strong northeast winds emanating from high pressure to the north and dewpoints in the low to mid 60s. This will make for very comfortable weather during the day and somewhat chilly weather at night with the strong wind. A wind advisory may be warranted by noon today since sustained winds are expected to be near 30 mph with gusts to 35 mph. Expect winds to gradually weaken into the weekend and turn to a more east-northeast direction. Rainfall chances look bleak the next few days due to the post shear line air mass and absence of any disturbances in the upstream flow.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Windy	82° / 75°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	77° / 66°	
Beijing	Snow	36° / 25°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	72° / 68°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	83° / 72°	
London	Showers	48° / 37°	
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	71° / 50°	
Manila	Sunny	90° / 75°	
Melbourne	Thunderstorms	90° / 66°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 71°	
New York	Showers	55° / 33°	
Osaka	Rain	57° / 52°	
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 46°	
Busan	Rain	55° / 46°	
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	63° / 50°	
Salem	Rain	64° / 37°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	56° / 45°	
Seoul	Cloudy	55° / 36°	
Tokyo	Rain	63° / 50°	
Washington, DC	Showers	60° / 33°	

## NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.net](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.net)

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:36 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.13	
11:01 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.87	
5:22 PM	LOW TIDE	0.47	
10:50 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.65	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Saturday	6:41 AM	6:20 PM
Sunday	6:41 AM	6:20 PM
Monday	6:41 AM	6:21 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	9:47 AM	10:21 PM
Friday	-	10:32 AM	11:18 PM
Saturday	-	11:18 AM	-
Sunday	12:16 AM	12:04 PM	-
Monday	1:13 AM	12:53 PM	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 6, 2020							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA156	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA112	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily
SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6				
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	7:30am	12:50pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:10am	1:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 5, 6, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	3:35am	7:20am	4	TW309	11:10am	4:40pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:10pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:30pm	7:20pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	OZ625	9:05pm	2:25am+1	3
TW310	5:40pm	10:15pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA189/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	OZ702/625	12:05pm	2:25am+1	3 via ICN
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
				OZ704/6233	11:45pm	12:50pm+1	2, 4, 6 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	1:40pm+1	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
				OZ704/6233	11:45pm	12:50pm+1	2, 4, 6 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	1:40pm+1	1, 3 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	12:50pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	1:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
OZ626/721	3:35am	11:50am	4 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:10pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:30pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	2:25am+1	3 via ICN
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)							
STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily				
				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
ROTA TO GUAM				FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
				2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
				2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily



# Business

## USDOL does wage survey of Guam's construction sector

**HAGATNA, Guam**—The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division is conducting a building, heavy, highway and residential construction survey in Guam to collect data to establish prevailing wage rates, as required under the Davis-Bacon and

Related Acts.

The survey is not limited to federally funded construction projects, and covers active building, heavy, highway and residential construction projects in Guam between May 1, 2019, and April 30, 2020.

"Davis-Bacon prevailing

wage rates should reflect the actual wages and fringe benefits paid to construction workers where the work takes place. The U.S. Department of Labor needs the full participation of the Guam construction industry community to set prevailing

wage rates," said the Wage and Hour Division regional administrator Ruben Rosalez in San Francisco, California. "Full participation by contractors and interested parties will allow us to provide accurate prevailing wages and to create complete wage determinations which, in turn, reduces the need for contractors to request additional classifications."

Notification letters and data collection forms (WD-10s) will be sent to interested parties and contractors known to the Wage and Hour Division. Data must be postmarked by Aug. 31, 2020, to be included. If you would like to participate, or have questions regarding the survey process and forms, contact Luis Cabuhat at (415) 241-

3538 or Rose Huynh at (415) 241-3539.

To complete the survey electronically, visit [www.dol.gov/whd/programs/dbra/wd10/index.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/dbra/wd10/index.htm). You do not need a letter to answer the survey.

WHD's mission is to promote and achieve compliance with labor standards to protect and enhance the welfare of the nation's workforce. WHD enforces federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. WHD also enforces the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, the Employee Polygraph Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, wage garnishment provisions of

the Consumer Credit Protection Act and a number of employment standards and worker protections as provided in several immigration related statutes. Additionally, WHD administers and enforces the prevailing wage requirements of the Davis Bacon Act and the Service Contract Act and other statutes applicable to federal contracts for construction and for the provision of goods and services.

The mission of the Department of Labor is to foster, promote and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights. **(PR)**

### Q&A: How virus is impacting Asia's cruises and passengers

By **DEE-ANN DURBIN** and **DAVID KOENIG**  
AP BUSINESS WRITERS

A new viral outbreak is wreaking havoc on cruises in Asia, where some passengers are stranded aboard ships and others can't leave China.

Japan's health ministry has confirmed 174 cases of the COVID-19 virus aboard Carnival Corp.'s Diamond Princess, which is docked in Yokohama, Japan. The ship that carried 3,700 passengers and crew into Japan is expected to remain under quarantine until at least Feb. 19.

Meanwhile, Holland America's Westerdam—which says it has no confirmed cases of the virus—is floating in the Gulf of Thailand with nowhere to dock. The ship's 2,257 passengers and crew had expected to disembark in Thailand on Thursday, but Thai authorities say the ship isn't welcome. Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines have also refused to let the ship dock because it made a stop in Hong Kong less than two weeks ago.

Here are some questions and answers about the virus's impact on the cruise industry and passengers:

#### HOW MANY CRUISE SHIPS ARE IN ASIA RIGHT NOW?

The Cruise Lines International Association—which represents around 90% of global cruise capacity—says around 10 of its 272 member ships are currently in Asia. Only the Diamond Princess has confirmed cases of virus, the association said. Six of the 10 ships have cancelled their itineraries for now, including Royal Caribbean's Spectrum of the Seas and MSC's Splendida.

#### HAVE ANY SHIPS BEEN ALLOWED TO LET PASSENGERS OFF?

Yes. On Sunday, Dream Cruises said passengers on its World Dream were cleared to disembark in Hong Kong after screenings found no positive tests for the virus. The ship had arrived in Hong

Kong four days earlier. In Italy, more than 6,600 passengers and crew were allowed to disembark from Carnival's Costa Smeralda on Jan. 31 after a Chinese passenger was found to have the flu and not the virus.

#### ARE CRUISE SHIPS BANNING SOME PASSENGERS FROM BOARDING?

Yes. Policies vary, but in general, cruise companies won't allow passengers or crew to board if they have visited, traveled from or passed through airports in China, Hong Kong and Macau within a certain time period—usually 14 days or 30 days. They also aren't allowing people to board if they have been in close contact with someone with the virus. Royal Caribbean was banning all passengers with passports from China, Hong Kong and Macau, but the company lifted that ban Monday. Norwegian Cruise Lines is still banning passengers who hold those passports.

#### IS A QUARANTINE THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE A VIRAL OUTBREAK ON A CRUISE?

According to Tara Smith, a professor who researches infectious diseases at Kent State University's College of Public Health, a hospital—not a ship—is the best place to keep people quarantined. The Diamond Princess may have already had environmental contamination when the quarantine began, which puts passengers and crew at risk of further transmission. "I think this was done without a lot of thought to consequences of ongoing transmission within the ship and the mental health of the passengers," Smith said.

#### WHAT OTHER PRECAUTIONS ARE CRUISE LINES TAKING?

Cruise lines are scanning the temperatures of passengers and crew and having them complete questionnaires before they board any ship. MSC says it's conducting elevated deep-cleaning on its ships; Royal Caribbean also

says it has stepped up cleaning of its ships and air filtration systems.

#### CAN PASSENGERS CATCH THE VIRUS THROUGH THE VENTILATION SYSTEMS?

Japanese health ministry official Masami Sakoi said the cabins on the Diamond Princess have separate air-conditioning systems, so guests aren't sharing the same air. "We do not consider the air-conditioning system as the cause of spreading infections," he said.

#### WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR PASSENGERS ABOARD THESE SHIPS?

Christina Kerby, a communications director with a health care company in San Francisco, struck an upbeat tone in her Twitter posts aboard the Westerdam. She says the ship is holding spin classes, magic shows and towel-folding demonstrations. But she expressed regret when Philippine crew members couldn't disembark in Manila to see their families, as they'd hoped. The situation is more grim aboard the Diamond Princess, where those under quarantine watched as officials in hazmat suits carried off sick passengers. Passenger David Abel has described the ship as a "floating prison."

#### WHEN WILL CRUISE OPERATIONS RETURN TO NORMAL?

That's unclear. Royal Caribbean has cancelled eight China sailings through March 4. Princess Cruises has cancelled 12 cruises through March 20. Holland America said it's weighing port restrictions in Asia before deciding on a cruise scheduled to leave Yokohama on Feb. 28. Norwegian Cruise Lines has canceled scheduled Asian cruises on the Norwegian Spirit through Dec. 7. In some cases, cruises are being rerouted. Norwegian said a 24-day cruise leaving South Africa on March 22 that was supposed to end in Singapore will now last 27 days and end in Greece, for example.

### Renovated 13th green at Country Club of the Pacific ready for play

**YONA, Guam**—The management team of the Country Club of the Pacific recently announced that the picturesque 13th green has been completely renovated and is open for play.

Primary to the improved playability of the new green is the installation of Trinity Zoysia turf. CCP is the first course in the Asia Pacific Region to install the highly durable turf. Trinity Zoysia is a drought-tolerant grass that provides playability to the highest levels with sustainable attributes of low water and fertilizer. Golfers will enjoy its lush and smooth texture, making the green's condition perfect for play by all skill levels.

Ben Ferguson, general manager of Pacific Islands Club Guam, which oversees the management of CCP said, "The Trinity Zoysia green is revolutionary and will increase playability of the course. We

are excited to announce this development for Guam's golf community and our visitors."

The renovation of the 13th green is the first on an aggressive list of ongoing improvements at the Yona property. Other planned developments include renovation of other greens and tee boxes, reconditioning of bunkers and improved upkeep of the course's aesthetics, including improved views and vistas.

"CCP is a beautiful property with incredible views. We've undergone some substantial upkeep of the property to open up the views of the ocean throughout the course," Ferguson said. "Feedback from our regular players and first-time visitors has been positive."

Activity has picked up at the course and is expected to continue as several charitable tournaments have returned to CCP. Guam National Golf

Federation president Richard Sablan said, "The improvements at CCP are substantial. CCP is full of history and nostalgia, and it's a great place to play."

"We invite our island's golfers to come out and see the improvements for themselves. They'll like the changes we've made to a course that has been a longtime favorite," Ferguson said.

CCP is open from 7am to 6pm. For more information or to make reservations, visit [ccp-guam.com](http://ccp-guam.com) or call 671-789-1361. Ask about resident rates and special visitor packages.

CCP is an 18-hole championship golf course on the southern end of Guam managed by Pacific Islands Club. Beginning in 2019, the course has been undergoing upgrades and improvements. Visit CCP online at [CCP-guam.com](http://CCP-guam.com) to learn more or to make a reservation. **(PR)**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 13th green of the Country Club of the Pacific has been completely renovated and is open for play.







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# Nation

## Sanders holds narrow lead over Buttigieg in New Hampshire

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—Bernie Sanders held a narrow lead over Pete Buttigieg in the New Hampshire Democratic primary Tuesday night as the two men from different generations and wings of their party battled for front-runner status in the chaotic nomination fight to take on President Donald Trump.

After essentially tying in Iowa last week, the strong showings from Buttigieg and Sanders cemented their status at the top of the 2020 Democratic field. And an unexpectedly strong performance from Amy Klobuchar gave her a stronger path out of New Hampshire as the contest moves on to the gantlet of state-by-state primary contests that lie ahead.

The strength of Sanders and Buttigieg was matched in reverse by the struggle of former Vice President Joe Biden, who spent most of the last year as the Democrats' national front-runner but fled New Hampshire hours before polls closed anticipating a bad finish. With final returns ahead, he was competing for fourth place with Elizabeth Warren, a disappointing turn for the senator from neighboring Massachusetts.

Neither Biden nor Warren was on track to receive any delegates.

With votes still coming in, the race was too early to call. But the front-runners were cheerleading and being cheered by their supporters.



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., with his wife Jane O'Meara Sanders, arrives to speak to supporters at a primary night election rally in Manchester, N.H., Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020.

"So many of you chose to meet a new era of challenge with a new generation of leadership," Buttigieg said.

Sanders boasted of "a movement from coast to coast ... to defeat the most dangerous president."

The New Hampshire vote made clear that the early days of the Democratic contest will be a battle largely between two men who are four decades apart in age and are ideological opposites. Sanders is a leading progressive voice, calling for a substantial government in-

tervention in health care and other sectors of the economy. Buttigieg has pressed for more incremental changes, giving Americans the option of retaining their private health insurance and making a point of appealing to Republicans and independents who may be dissatisfied with Trump.

Yet Sanders and Buttigieg enter the next phase of the campaign in different political positions.

While Warren made clear she will remain in the race, Sanders, well-financed and

with an ardent army of supporters, is quickly becoming the leader of the progressive wing of the party.

Meanwhile, Buttigieg still has moderate rivals to contend with, including Klobuchar, whose standout debate performance led to a late surge in New Hampshire. Biden promises strength in upcoming South Carolina, while former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg was not on Tuesday's ballot but looms next month.

Biden, after dismal performances in Iowa and New

York City mayor made the comments at a 2015 appearance at the Aspen Institute, as part of an overall defense of his support for the controversial "stop and frisk" policing tactic that has been found to disproportionately affect minorities.

Bloomberg launched his presidential bid late last year with an apology for his support for the policy. He's taking an unconventional approach to the campaign, bypassing the traditional early states and gaining attention by flooding the airwaves with hundreds of millions of dollars in ads. He's spent recent days courting black voters whose support will be crucial to winning the Democratic nomination and will begin a campaign swing through the South on Wednesday.

Seeking to blunt any political fallout from the comments, Bloomberg said Tuesday the remarks "do not reflect my commitment to criminal justice reform and racial equity."

The billionaire and former

### Voting now and then

More than nine in 10 Americans say they would vote for a presidential candidate nominated by their party who happened to be black, Catholic or a woman, a big change from attitudes 60 years ago.

% Yes, would vote for that person

Sept. 10-15 1958 Jan. 16-29 2020

**Black**  
38% 96%

**Catholic**  
67% 95%

**Jewish**  
63% 93%

**Women**  
54% 93%

**Atheist**  
18% 60%

Source: Gallup  
Graphic: Staff, TNS

Hampshire, is staking his candidacy on a strong win Jan. 29th in South Carolina, which

is the first state with a substantial black population to weigh in on the Democratic race.

After a chaotic beginning to primary voting last week in Iowa, Democrats hoped New Hampshire would provide clarity in their urgent quest to pick someone to take on Trump in November. At least two candidates dropped out in the wake of weak finishes Tuesday night: just-the-facts moderate Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet and political newcomer Andrew Yang, who attracted a small but loyal following over the past year and was one of just three candidates of color left in the race.

While struggling candidates sought to minimize the latest results, history suggests that the first-in-the-nation primary will have enormous influence shaping the 2020 race. In the modern era, no Democrat has ever become the party's general election nominee without finishing first or second in New Hampshire.

The action was on the Democratic side, but Trump easily won New Hampshire's Republican primary. He was facing token opposition from former Massachusetts Gov. Bill Weld.

Warren, among the front-runners for months, offered an optimistic outlook as she faced cheering supporters, "Our campaign is built for the long haul, and we are just getting started."

Despite an embarrassing defeat that raised questions about her path forward, Warren vowed to move trudge on.

"Our campaign is built for the long haul, and we are just getting started," she declared.

Having already predicted he would "take a hit" in New Hampshire after a distant fourth-place finish in Iowa, Biden essentially ceded the state. He was traveling to South Carolina Tuesday as he bet his candidacy on a strong showing there later this month boosted by support from black voters.

More than a year after Democrats began announcing their presidential candidacies, the party is struggling to coalesce behind a message or a messenger in its desperate quest to defeat Trump. That raised the stakes of the New Hampshire primary as voters weighed whether candidates were too liberal, too moderate or too inexperienced—vulnerabilities that could play to Trump's advantage in the fall.

He was not on the ballot, but Bloomberg, a New York billionaire, loomed over the New Hampshire contest as moderates failed to embrace a single alternative to Sanders.

### Yang, who created buzz with freedom dividend, ends 2020 bid

Democrat Andrew Yang, an entrepreneur who created buzz for his presidential campaign by talking about his love of math and championing a universal basic income that would give every American adult \$1,000 per month, suspended his 2020 bid on Tuesday.

"I am the math guy, and it is clear to me from the numbers that we are not going to win this race," Yang said in front of a crowd of supporters as votes in New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary were being counted.

"This is not an easy decision, or something I made lightly with the team. Endings are hard and I've always had the intention to stay in the race until the very end," he added. "But I have been persuaded that the message of this campaign will not be strengthened by my staying in the race any longer."

Yang announced his departure from the race shortly before

Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet did Tuesday night, bringing the Democratic field to single digits. (AP)

### Bennet ends 2020 bid after poor showing in New Hampshire

Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet ended his long-shot presidential bid Tuesday, failing to break out of a crowded Democratic field dominated by other moderate candidates, including Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar.

Bennet, 55, was a late entrant to the race who staked his bid largely on trying to win New Hampshire. He only formally announced his candidacy in early May, after completing treatment for prostate cancer. He was the seventh senator and second white Colorado moderate to join the field, which made it difficult for him to stand out.

"We weren't able to get much in the way of name identification in the state," Bennet said shortly after polls closed in New Hampshire.

"We didn't have the resources to compete. ... I'm frustrated because I think we did have something to contribute in terms of the agenda."

Bennet dropped out of the race shortly after entrepreneur Andrew Yang announced his own departure Tuesday night, bringing the Democratic presidential field to single digits.

### Joe Biden looks to South Carolina to resurrect his campaign

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Joe Biden brought his wounded presidential campaign to South Carolina on Tuesday, staking his hopes for a comeback on the loyalty of black voters in the state after a dismal finish in the New Hampshire primary magnified his disappointing finish in Iowa.

"I know this is going to be the fight of my life," Biden told about 200 enthusiastic supporters gathered near the South Carolina Capitol to hear the 77-year-old former vice president deliver an emotional appeal. Biden eagerly



# Asia

## China's new virus cases fall again, deaths now exceed 1,100

**BEIJING (AP)**—China on Wednesday reported another drop in the number of new cases of a viral infection and 97 more deaths, pushing the total dead past 1,100 even as the country remains largely closed down to prevent the spread of the disease.

The National Health Commission on Wednesday said 2,015 new cases had been reported over the last 24 hours, declining for a second day. The total number of cases in mainland China is 44,653, although many experts say a large number of others infected have gone uncounted.

The 97 additional deaths from the virus raised the main-

land toll to 1,113.

Despite the official end of the extended Lunar New Year holiday, China remained mostly closed for business as many remained at home, with some 60 million people under virtual quarantine.

The World Health Organization has named the disease caused by the virus as COVID-19, avoiding any animal or geographic designation to avoid stigmatization and to show the disease comes from a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.

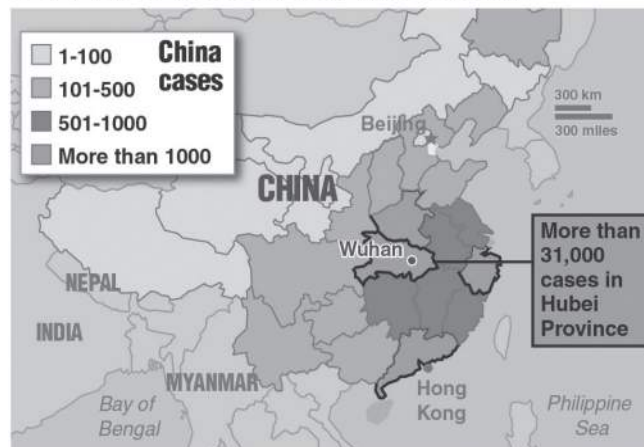
The illness was first reported in December and connected to a food market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where

the outbreak has largely been concentrated.

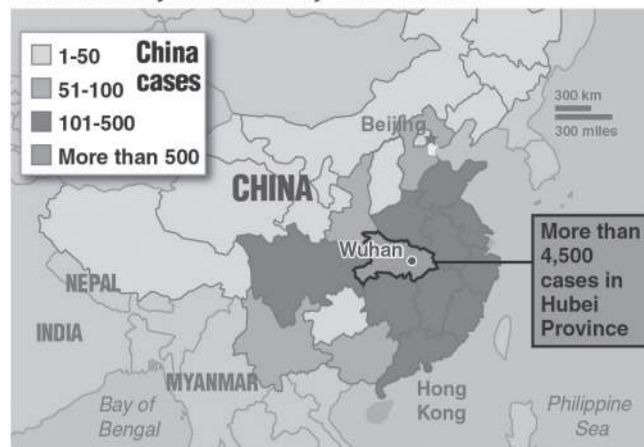
China's official media reported Tuesday that the top health officials in Hubei province, of which Wuhan is the capital, have been relieved of their duties. No reasons were given, although the province's initial response was deemed slow and ineffective. Speculation that higher-level officials could be sacked has simmered, but doing so could spark political infighting and be a tacit admission of responsibility.

The virus outbreak has become the latest political challenge for the party and its leader, Xi Jinping, who despite accu-

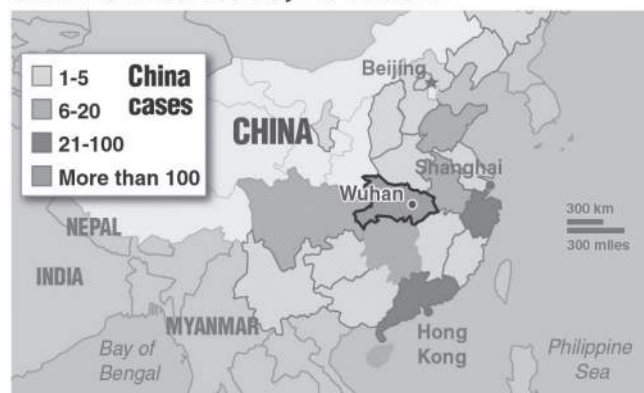
### Coronavirus spread in China Feb. 11: 42,638 cases, 1,000 deaths



### Jan. 30: 7,711 cases, 170 deaths



### Jan. 23: 830 cases, 25 deaths



Source: AP, BBC  
Graphic: Staff, TNS

ing more political power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, has struggled to handle crises on multiple fronts. These include a sharply slowing domestic economy, the trade war with the U.S. and push-back on China's increasingly aggressive foreign policies.

Zhong Nanshan, a leading Chinese epidemiologist, said that while the virus outbreak in China may peak this month, the situation at the center of the crisis remains more challenging.

"We still need more time of hard working in Wuhan," he said, describing the isolation of infected patients there a priority.

"We have to stop more people from being infected," he said. "The problem of human to human transmission has not yet been resolved."

Without enough facilities to handle the number of cases, Wuhan has been building prefabricated hospitals and converting a gym and other large spaces to house patients and try to isolate them from others.

The restart of business poses a risk of further spreading the virus, but China has little recourse, said Cong Liang, secretary general of the National Development and Reform Commission, the country's main economic planning body.

"Without the reopening of businesses, in the short term, it will affect the supply of medical material and ... in the long run, it will affect the supply of all kinds of production and life materials and will make the control and prevention efforts on the front line unsustainable. The target of defeating the epidemic will not be reached," Cong said at a news conference.

## Japan confirms 39 new virus cases, 174 total on cruise ship

**TOKYO (AP)**—Japan's health ministry said Wednesday that 39 new cases of a virus have been confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at a Japanese port.

The update brings the total found on the Diamond Princess to 174 cases.

The ministry also said the virus was confirmed in a official who participated in the initial quarantine checks the night the ship returned to Yokohama Port near Tokyo on Feb. 3. The quarantine official is being treated in the hospital.

The new cases bring Japan's total to 203 people in-

fectured by the the new virus, COVID-19.

The night of the ship's arrival, Japanese health officials began medical checks on all of the ship's 3,700 passengers and crew after one previous passenger tested positive for the virus.

The U.S.-operated Diamond Princess had completed a 14-day tour during which it stopped at Hong Kong and several other Asian ports before returning to Japan. An 80-year-old man who disembarked in Hong Kong tested positive for the virus, prompting Hong Kong to notify the ship and Japanese authorities,

who then ordered the quarantine and testing.

Concerns over the virus have rerouted and canceled other cruises. The Westerdam cruise ship carrying 2,257 passengers and crew is now in the Gulf of Thailand with nowhere to dock after being refused entry in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand. There are no confirmed cases of the virus on board, but it stopped in Hong Kong less than two weeks ago, which is within the incubation period of the virus.

COVID-19 is a coronavirus that emerged in China in December.

## Philippines notifies US of intent to end major security pact

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)**—The Philippines notified the United States on Tuesday it would end a major security pact allowing American forces to train in the country, in the most serious threat under President Rodrigo Duterte to their 69-year treaty alliance.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said in a tweet that Manila's notice of termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement was received by the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The termination would take effect after 180 days unless both sides agree to keep it.

Locsin signed the notice on the order of Duterte, who has often criticized U.S. security policies while praising those of China and Russia despite the Philippine military's close historic ties with its American counterpart.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said Tuesday in Brussels, Belgium, that he only received notice of Duterte's order on Monday evening and had not yet fully digested the details.

Esper called it "unfortunate." "I do think it would be a move in the wrong direction," he said.

Esper said that when he visited the Philippines last November he thought the relationship was on a strong footing.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila acknowledged receipt of Manila's notice and said Washington "will carefully consider how best to move forward to advance our shared interests."

"This is a serious step with significant implications for the U.S.-Philippines alliance," the embassy said in a statement. "Our two countries enjoy a warm relationship, deeply rooted in history. We remain committed to the friendship between our two peoples."

In a Senate hearing last week, Locsin warned that abrogating the 1998 security accord with Washington would undermine Philippine security and foster aggression in the disputed South China Sea. U.S. military presence in the strategic waterway has been seen as a crucial counterweight to China, which claims

virtually the entire sea.

Locsin proposed a review of the agreement to fix contentious issues, including criminal jurisdiction over erring American troops, instead of abrogating it. Philippine defense and military officials did not immediately issue any reaction to the government move.

Duterte threatened to terminate the security agreement after Washington reportedly canceled the U.S. visa of a loyal ally, Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, who was linked to human rights violations when he first enforced the president's deadly anti-drug crackdown as the national police chief in 2016.

Thousands of mostly poor suspects have been killed under the bloody campaign Duterte launched when he took office in mid-2016, alarming the U.S. and other Western governments and human rights watchdogs.

Duterte gave the U.S. a month to restore dela Rosa's visa, but U.S. officials have not publicly reacted to the Philippine leader's demand.

## Modi's party faces stunning defeat in New Delhi elections

**NEW DELHI (AP)**—Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party was facing a stunning defeat by a regional party Tuesday in elections in the national capital that were seen as a referendum on Modi's policies, such as a new national citizenship law that excludes Muslims.

Saturday's New Delhi legislative elections pit Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party against the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party, or "common man's" party, whose pro-poor policies focused on fixing state-run schools and providing cheap electricity, free health care and bus transport for women during its five years in power.

Modi and Home minister Amit Shah appealed to majority Hindus by focusing on national issues such as the citizenship law, which triggered

widespread protests, at the expense of problems facing the capital's millions of residents.

At least 23 people were killed in clashes between police and protesters in December.

With counting of votes nearing completion, the Aam Aadmi Party, or AAP, had won 28 seats and was leading in another 35 of the 70 constituencies, while the BJP had won 2 seats and was leading in another five, the Election Commission said. The Congress party, led by Sonia Gandhi, was unlikely to win any seats.

Full results were expected later Tuesday.

A defeat is a setback to Modi's prestige, coming less than eight months after he led the BJP to a resounding victory in national elections. The party won all seven of the capital's parliamentary seats in those polls.

The victory will be a major boost for AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, the 51-year-old incumbent New Delhi chief minister and anti-corruption crusader.

Kejriwal joined hundreds of his supporters in celebrating the party's performance. In a brief speech, he said the election "has given birth to a new brand of politics—politics of development" meeting people's basic needs.

BJP President J.P. Nadda congratulated Kejriwal and his party and said the BJP would "play a constructive role of opposition."

Local BJP leader Manoj Tewari denied the AAP charge that his party had tried to create a Hindu-Muslim divide during the elections. Hindus comprise more than 80% of India's 1.3 billion people and Muslims about 14%.



# World

## Global experts study promising drugs, vaccines for new virus

GENEVA (AP)—The World Health Organization convened outside experts Tuesday to try to speed the development of tests, treatments and vaccines against the new coronavirus, as doctors on the front lines experiment on patients with

various drugs in hopes of saving lives in the meantime.

The 400 scientists participating in the two-day meeting—many remotely—will try to determine which approaches seem promising enough to advance to the next step: studies in people

to prove if they really work.

“We prioritize what is really urgent, what we absolutely need to know to fight the outbreak, to develop drugs, vaccines,” said Marie-Paule Kieny, co-chair of the meeting and a viral-disease specialist at

the French research institution INSERM. That will allow science to “focus on what is the most pressing issue and not to disperse too much the efforts.”

Also on the agenda: Is it possible to build a standing supply of drugs similar to the vaccine stockpiles that exist for diseases such as yellow fever and Ebola?

“If any of these drugs does show an effect, there will be

massive demand,” Dr. Graham Cooke, a professor of infectious diseases at Imperial College London, said earlier this week.

There are no proven treatments or vaccines for the new and still-mysterious virus, which has infected more than 43,000 people worldwide and killed over 1,000, with the overwhelming majority of cases in China. And while several labs have come up with

tests for the virus, there is no quick means of diagnosis, and results take time.

“It’s hard to believe that just two months ago, this virus—which has come to captivate the attention of media, financial markets and political leaders—was completely unknown to us,” WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at the start of the meeting.

### New virus has infected more than 45,100 people globally

A viral outbreak that began in China has infected more than 45,100 people globally. The World Health Organization has named the illness COVID-19, referring to its origin late last year and the coronavirus that causes it.

The latest figures reported by each government’s health authority as of Wednesday in Beijing:

■ Mainland China: 1,113 deaths among 44,653 confirmed cases, mostly in the central province of Hubei.

■ Hong Kong: 49 cases, 1 death

■ Macao: 10.

■ Japan: 203, including 174 from a cruise ship docked in Japan

■ Singapore: 47

■ Thailand: 33

■ South Korea: 28

■ Malaysia: 18

■ Taiwan: 18

■ Australia: 14

■ Germany: 14

■ Vietnam: 15

■ United States: 13. Separately, one U.S. citizen died in China

■ France: 11

■ United Kingdom: 8

■ United Arab Emirates: 8

■ Canada: 7

■ Philippines: 3 cases, including 1 death

■ India: 3

■ Italy: 3

■ Russia: 2

■ Spain: 2

■ Belgium: 1

■ Nepal: 1

■ Sri Lanka: 1

■ Sweden: 1

■ Cambodia: 1

■ Finland: 1 (AP)

## Official: Sudan to hand over al-Bashir for genocide trial

CAIRO (AP)—Sudan’s transitional authorities have

the Darfur conflict.

For a decade after his indictment,



al-Bashir

agreed to hand over ousted autocrat Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court to face trial on charges of war crimes and genocide, a top Sudanese official said Tuesday, in a deal with

rebels to surrender all those wanted in connection with

frequently to visit friendly leaders without fear of arrest.

He even attended the 2018 World Cup in Russia, where he kicked a soccer ball playfully during an airport welcome ceremony and watched matches from luxury seating.

The military overthrew al-Bashir in April 2019 amid massive public protests of his rule, and he has been jailed in Khartoum since then. Military leaders initially ruled out surrendering him to The Hague, saying he would be tried at home.

## London police deploy face scan tech, stirring privacy fears

LONDON (AP)—London police started using facial recognition cameras on Tuesday to automatically scan for wanted people, as authorities adopt the technology that has raised concerns about increased surveillance and erosion of privacy.

Surveillance cameras mounted on a blue police van monitored people coming out of a shopping center in Stratford, in east London. Signs warned that police were using

the technology to find people “wanted for serious crimes.” Officers stood nearby, explaining to passers-by how the system works.

It’s the first time London’s Metropolitan Police Service has used live facial recognition cameras in an operational deployment since carrying out a series of trials that ended last year.

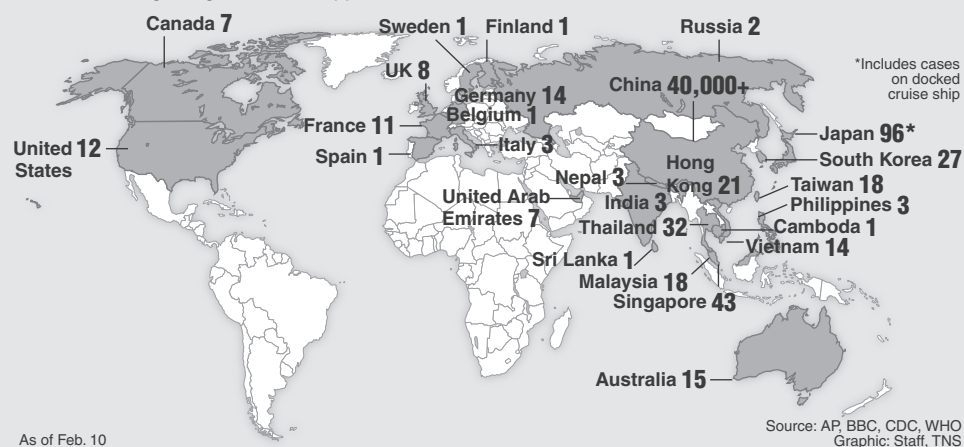
London police are using the technology despite warnings from rights groups, lawmak-

ers and independent experts about a lack of accuracy and bias in the system and the erosion of privacy. Activists fear it’s just the start of expanded surveillance.

“We don’t accept this. This isn’t what you do in a democracy. You don’t scan people’s faces with cameras. This is something you do in China, not in the U.K.,” said Silkie Carlo, director of privacy campaign group Big Brother Watch.

## Coronavirus cases rise to over 40,000

The mainland death toll rose by 97 to 908 in the 24 hours through midnight Sunday and 3,062 new cases were reported. Outside mainland China, at least 440 cases have been confirmed, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines.



## IRELAND'S FIRST SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Robyn Peoples, left, 26, and Sharni Edwards, 27, pose together after becoming the first same sex couple to marry in Northern Ireland, in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, Tuesday Feb. 11, 2020. Two women tied the knot Tuesday in Northern Ireland’s first same-sex wedding, after the region became the last part of the United Kingdom to legalize gay marriage.

AP

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Egypt’s booming population officially hits 100 million

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt’s fast-growing population hit 100 million Tuesday, the official statistics agency announced, presenting a pressing problem for an already overburdened country with limited resources. The staggering figure is an increase of 7 million since the publication of the latest census results in 2017. Egypt’s population has tripled since 1960, with the annual growth rate peaking in 1987 at nearly 2.8%. Every day nearly 5,000 people are born in Egypt, the agency estimates. The country is trying to cope with resurgent birth rates and a “youth bulge” that has reached a peak. Roughly 62% of the population are below age 29, according to the U.N. Population Fund.

### Vietnam truck victims died of lack oxygen, overheating

LONDON (AP)—Provisional postmortem examinations of 39 bodies found inside a shipping container in southeast England concluded the victims from Vietnam died of a combination of a lack of oxygen and overheating in a closed space, police said Tuesday. The bodies were found Oct. 23 in the English town of Grays, east of London. Police said the people who died ranged in age from 15 to 44. The 31 men and eight women are believed to have paid people traffickers for their clandestine transit into Eng-

land. “Our teams are continuing to progress hundreds of lines of enquiry and are working with the National Crime Agency and other law enforcement agencies from across the globe to further their lengthy and complex investigation,” Essex county police said in a statement. The revelations came as police made strides to identify suspects in the network believed to be responsible for the smuggling operation.

### Spanish government passes 1st hurdle to legalize euthanasia

LISBON, Portugal (AP)—Spain’s parliament has endorsed an effort by the new Socialist-led government to legalize euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide. After early elections twice last year thwarted the Socialist party’s attempts to change the law, parliament voted Tuesday by 201 votes to 140 in favor of accepting its euthanasia bill for consideration. The step puts the bill on a path to possible approval. It now goes to a parliamentary health committee for discussion and then heads to the Senate before returning to the lower house for a final vote. There is no fixed timetable for those stages, but Health Minister Salvador Illa said he hoped to see the euthanasia law enacted by June. That would make Spain just the fourth European Union country—after Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands—to allow euthanasia, which is when a doctor kills patients at their request.



# Environment

## Global energy-related carbon emissions flat in 2019

**BERLIN** (AP)—Global energy-related emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide remained steady last year, with declines in rich countries balancing out a rise in poor nations, according to data published Tuesday.

The International Energy Agency said emissions of the main man-made greenhouse gas stayed at 33 gigatons in 2019, even as the world economy grew by 2.9%.

"This was primarily due to declining emissions from electricity generation in advanced economies, thanks to the expanding role of renewable sources (mainly wind and solar), fuel switching from coal to natural gas, and higher nuclear power generation," the Paris-based agency said. "Other factors included milder weather in several countries, and slower economic growth in some emerging markets."

The country with the biggest drop in energy-related CO2 emissions was the United States, which recorded a fall of 2.9% to 4.8 gigatons on the back of coal-fired power plant closures and lower demand for electricity. The European Union saw its emissions fall by 5% to 2.9 gigatons, while Japan's dropped 4.3% to just over 1 gigaton in 2019.

By contrast, emissions in the rest of the world rose by almost 400 million tonnes last year, led by higher coal use in Asia.

The IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol, expressed hope that annual emissions of CO2 would only decline in future.

"We now need to work hard to make sure that 2019 is remembered as a definitive peak in global emissions, not just another pause in growth," Birol said in a statement. "We have the energy technologies to do this, and we have to make use of them all."

Reducing emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases is key to curbing climate change.

## Dolphins shot, stabbed and killed off Florida coast. There's a \$20,000 reward for answers



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is offering \$20,000 for information that will lead to the culprits who shot, stabbed and killed three dolphins near Florida's coast in recent days and months.

By DEVOUN CETOUTE  
MIAMI HERALD

**MIAMI**—Three Florida dolphins met gruesome deaths and authorities want those responsible found and punished.

Late last week, biologists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission found a dolphin dead from a bullet or sharp object off Naples, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said. That same week, Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge experts found another dolphin with a bullet in its left side along Pensacola beach.

In May, a dolphin was found dead with a puncture wound in its head off Captiva Island.

The string of dolphin deaths has NOAA offering \$20,000 for information that leads to civil penalty or criminal convictions for those

responsible. Call the NOAA Enforcement Hotline at 800-853-1964. Tips may be left anonymously.

Since 2002, at least 29 dolphins have been shot, by bullets and arrows, and impaled. Harassing, hunting, killing or feeding wild dolphins is illegal, and those caught may face up to \$100,000 in fines and a year in jail, according to NOAA.

Biologists believe the recent case of dolphin deaths stem from people feeding the mammals. Dolphins begin to associate humans and boats with food and then put themselves in dangerous situations to get it.

That is why wildlife experts tell the public not to feed alligators, raccoons and other Florida wildlife, invasive or native. Wild animals that learn to depend on humans can be dangerous.

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION/TNS

## Antarctica's new record high temperature: Is it climate change?

By DOYLE RICE  
(TNS)

Antarctica made worldwide news last week when one location—an Argentine research base—set a record high temperature for the continent of 64.9 degrees.

Experts differ on what the new record high may have to do with human-caused climate change.

"This record looks to be a one-time extreme event that doesn't tell us anything about Antarctic climate change," David Bromwich, a climate researcher at the Ohio State

University, told The Washington Post. Bromwich added, however, that the peninsula has warmed noticeably since the late-1940s.

Another expert noted that "this is a record from only a single station, but it is in the context of what's happening elsewhere and is more evidence that as the planet warms we get more warm records and fewer cold records," Steve Rintoul, an oceanographer and Antarctic expert at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, told the Guardian about the new record high.

Eric Steig, a glaciologist studying climate change at the University of Washington, said to The Washington Post that "although there is decade-to-decade variability, the underlying trend across most of the continent is warming."

He said that the record will likely be broken again in the "not-so-distant future."

James Renwick, a climate scientist at the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, said the new record was likely due to the warming climate and northwest winds hitting the peninsula, according to the Guardian.

"The reason the peninsula is warming faster than other places is a combination of natural variations and warming signals," Renwick told the Guardian. "It's a sign of the warming that has been happening there that's much faster than the global average," he said.

He also noted that strong winds coming from the northwest and warmer conditions often go hand in hand.

AccuWeather senior meteorologist Jim Andrews said that in addition to regional northwest winds "influencing the peninsula," extremely localized southwest winds

were occurring at the base when the new temperature record was set.

The local southwest winds caused the air to warm and compress as it flowed down from mountains to the south of the base, which sits at sea level, and Andrews explained this is why the temperature was able to climb so high.

And while one spot in Antarctica may have set an all-time record high temperature, let's not get carried away: The continent is still bitterly cold overall and isn't about to replace Cancun as a warm-weather destination anytime soon.

While the tip of the Antarctic peninsula hit 64.9 degrees, the temperature at Russian research station Vostok was 50 degrees below zero on Friday, AccuWeather reported.

And while that's certainly cold, it's still far from the continent's record low: Vostok holds the record for lowest temperature ever recorded in Antarctica, which was set on July 21, 1983, when the temperature dropped to 128.56 degrees below zero, AccuWeather said.

The Russian station is located much farther inland than Argentina and is closer to Australia and New Zealand.



# Life & Style

## Actor Jussie Smollett faces 6 new charges in Chicago

**CHICAGO** (AP)—Actor Jussie Smollett was indicted Tuesday for a second time on charges of lying to police about a racist and anti-gay attack he allegedly staged on himself in downtown Chicago, renewing a divisive criminal case that drew worldwide attention last year.

The indictment came from a special prosecutor who was appointed after Cook County prosecutors dropped the same charges last March.

The new charges were sure to reignite many of the tensions that surrounded Smollett a year ago. When his claims first emerged, he drew a groundswell of support from fans and celebrities and gave an emotional television interview about the attack.

The case came to reflect the polarized state of political discourse in America. Many Democrats initially called it a shocking instance of Trump-era racism and hate, while Republicans depicted it as yet another example of liberals rushing to judgment and disparaging the president's supporters as bigots.

Special prosecutor Dan Webb said in a statement that Smollett faces six felony counts of disorderly conduct, charges that stem from four separate false reports that he gave to police in which he contended he was a victim of a hate crime "knowing that he was not the victim of a crime."

The statement immediately raised questions about county prosecutors' decision to drop the charges and made it clear that those prosecutors had not adequately explained to special prosecutors why they did so. But Webb stressed that



In this March 14, 2019, file photo, Empire actor Jussie Smollett arrives at the Leighton Criminal Court Building for his hearing in Chicago.

he had reached no conclusions about whether anyone involved in the case had engaged in any wrongdoing.

Smollett, who is black and gay, was originally charged with disorderly conduct in February 2019 for allegedly staging the attack and lying about it to investigators. The allegations were dropped the following month with little explanation, angering police officials and then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Tina Glandian, Smollett's attorney, questioned Webb's decision to file new charges.

The indictment "raises serious questions about the integrity of the investigation that led to the renewed charges," Glandian said, citing the use of the same detectives who were part of the original investigation into the attack to conduct the latest probe, despite Smollett's pending civil claims

against the city and police officers for malicious prosecution.

He is scheduled to appear in court for arraignment on Feb. 24.

Smollett told police he was walking home early on Jan. 29, 2019, when two masked men approached him, made racist and homophobic insults, beat him and looped a noose around his neck before fleeing. He said his assailants, at least one of whom he described as white, told him he was in "MAGA country"—a reference to President Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again."

Several weeks later, authorities alleged that Smollett had paid two black friends \$3,500 to help him stage the attack because he was unhappy with his salary as an actor on "Empire," a Fox series about that follows a black family as they navigate the ups and downs of

the recording industry. Smollett was accused of using the scheme to drum up publicity for his career.

A judge in August appointed Webb, a former U.S. attorney, to look into why the original charges were dropped.

## Closings next as Weinstein declines to testify at rape trial

**NEW YORK** (AP)—The defense rested its case Tuesday in Harvey Weinstein's rape trial without the disgraced Hollywood mogul taking the witness stand, setting the stage for closing arguments in a landmark #MeToo trial punctuated by graphic testimony from six accusers.

As expected, Weinstein chose not to testify, avoiding the risk of having prosecutors grill him on cross-examination about the vile allegations. He confirmed the decision after returning to the courtroom from meeting with his lawyers behind closed doors for about a half-hour as speculation swirled that he was pushing to testify.

Asked as he left court if he was thinking of testifying, Weinstein said: "I wanted to."

Defense lawyer Arthur Aidala added that Weinstein "was ready, willing, able and actually quite anxious to testify and clear his name" but didn't do so because his lawyers felt prosecutors "failed miserably" to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Jurors are expected to hear the defense's closing argument Thursday, followed by the prosecution's closing Friday. Jury deliberations are slated to start Tuesday. Court is closed Wednesday and again on Monday for holidays.

By not testifying, Weinstein followed the example of de-

Webb also was investigating whether phone calls that Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx had with a Smollett relative and a former aide of former first lady Michelle Obama unduly influenced the decision to drop charges. Foxx recused herself from the case but continued to weigh in.

At the time, Judge Michael Toomin, who assigned the case to Webb, raised the possibility that Smollett could be charged again. According to the judge and attorneys, double jeopardy does not apply because Smollett was never prosecuted.

In his news release, Webb said he concluded that prosecuting Smollett was "in the interest of justice" for a number of reasons, including the extensive details of Smollett's false account as well as the resources that the police department threw at the investigation.

When the first indictment against Smollett was returned, Webb wrote, the state's attorney's office had concluded

that the evidence in the case was "strong." But the office failed to offer any new evidence to explain why authorities dropped the charges just a few weeks later, Webb said.

Further, Webb took issue with an assertion in a news release issued when the charges were dropped that Smollett had not received special treatment and that the case was resolved "under the same criteria that would be available for any defendant with similar circumstances." Webb asked for but never received any examples of other such cases, he wrote.

The city has sued Smollett, seeking reimbursement of more than \$130,000 for overtime paid to officers who were involved in investigating Smollett's report. Smollett's attorneys have said the city should not be allowed to recover costs from Smollett because it accepted \$10,000 from the actor "as payment in full in connection with the dismissal of the charges against him."



Harvey Weinstein arrives at a Manhattan courthouse for his rape trial in New York, Monday, Feb. 10, 2020.

fendants in other high-profile sex crimes cases. They include Bill Cosby, who didn't take the witness stand either time he was tried for drugging and molesting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home. After a mistrial in 2017, a second trial resulted in the comedian's conviction.

Weinstein, 67, is charged with forcibly performing oral sex on Mimi Hiley in 2006 and raping a different woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013. Other accusers were called as witnesses as part of a prosecution effort to show he has used the same tactics to victimize many women over the years.

Weinstein has maintained any sexual encounters were consensual.

The Associated Press has a policy of not publishing the names of people who al-

lege sexual assault without their consent. It is withholding the name of the woman accusing Weinstein of raping her in 2013 because it isn't clear if she wishes to be identified publicly.

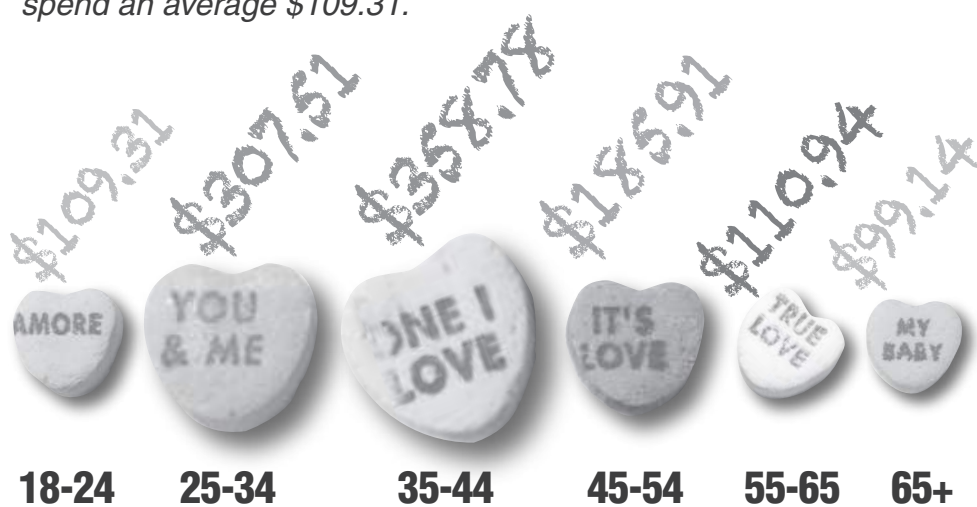
After the jury left for the day, Weinstein's lawyers sparred with prosecutor Joan Illuzzi-Orbon over her plan to mention in her closing argument that his physical appearance has changed significantly since the time of the alleged assaults.

Weinstein has hobbled into court each day with a walker, parking the device behind the defense table. His lawyers say it's needed because of recent back surgery, but Illuzzi said it seemed more like a prop put there to sway jurors' sympathies.

"It is not a prop! Enough!" Weinstein lawyer Damon Cheronis said.

## Valentine's Day spending by age

Those celebrating the holiday said they plan to spend an average of \$196.31, up 21 percent over last year. The youngest Valentine's shoppers surveyed – those ages 18-24 – plan to spend an average \$109.31.



Source: NRF  
Graphic: Staff, TNS





House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., tears her copy of President Donald Trump's State of the Union address after he delivered it to a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2020. Vice President Mike Pence applauds at left.

**NEW YORK** (AP)—The week President Donald Trump was acquitted in his impeachment trial was Fox News Channel's best in the ratings since the weeks he was elected and inaugurated.

The Nielsen company said Fox News averaged 4.27 million viewers in prime time last week, better than any network except for ABC, which televised the Academy Awards, and CBS.

It was the fifth most-watched week ever for Fox's prime-time schedule, and highest since election week 2016, Nielsen said. The only other times Fox

topped that mark came during two weeks in March 2003, during the Iraq War, and the August week in 2015 when the network showed the year's first Republican debate—the first one Trump participated in.

Measuring the entire day instead of just the evening hours, it was Fox's best week since January 2017, when Trump took office.

Fox News is Trump's favorite network, although he's grumbled when there are some things on the air that aren't to his liking, and the destination of choice for his supporters,

too. Besides his impeachment acquittal last week, Trump delivered a State of the Union address highly regarded by his fans, and the Iowa caucus turned into a dysfunctional mess for Democrats.

Led by Sean Hannity's average of 4.9 million viewers, it was the most-watched week ever for all three of Fox's prime-time opinion shows, Nielsen said. "Tucker Carlson Tonight" averaged 4.7 million viewers, and "The Ingraham Angle" had 4.1 million viewers.

Of the 40 most-watched programs on cable television

without mentioning the film by name, said it was intended "to inflame and cause chaos."

The cancellation came after the studio had already paused the ad campaign for the R-rated film in the wake of mass shootings in Texas, Ohio and California.

The film features 12 strangers who awake in a clearing who don't yet know they've been chosen for The Hunt, but

Swank says at one point that "it wasn't real" amid images of shootings, explosions and other violence.

The trailer includes the line, "The most talked about movie of the year is one nobody's seen yet."

In August, Universal Pictures canceled a September release for "The Hunt" after criticism, including from President Donald Trump. The president,

## Universal will release controversial 'Hunt' film in March

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Universal Pictures said Tuesday that it will release the social satire "The Hunt," a film it canceled in the wake of criticism about its premise of "elites" hunting people for sport in red states.

A trailer announcing the film's March 13 release date presents the "elites" hunting regular people as a conspiracy theory. Star Hilary

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# Fox News

## has best ratings since Trump election, inauguration

last week, 39 were on Fox News—with one lonely Rachel Maddow show on MSNBC the exception.

ABC topped the broadcasters in prime time with an average of 7.7 million viewers, despite the lowest-rated Oscars broadcast of all time. CBS averaged 4.8 million viewers, NBC had 4.1 million, Fox broadcasting had 3.2 million, Univision had 1.4 million, ION Television had 1.3 million, Telemundo had 1 million and the CW had 640,000.

After Fox News, the most popular cable networks in prime time were MSNBC with 1.59 million viewers, HGTV with 1.21 million, TLC with 1.16 million and CNN with 1.13 million.

ABC's "World News Tonight" led the evening news ratings race with an average of 9.2 million viewers. NBC's "Nightly News" was second with 8.3 million and the "CBS Evening News" had 6.1 million.

For the week of Feb. 3-9, the most popular shows, their networks and viewerships:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. "The Oscars," ABC, 23.57 million.   | 11. "State of the Union Debate," ABC, 7.87 million.                           |
| 2. "Live From the Red Carpet" (7:30 to 8 p.m. Eastern), ABC, 11.91 million.              | 12. "The Masked Singer," Fox, 7.46 million.                                   |
| 3. "State of the Union," Fox News, 11.68 million.  | 13. "State of the Union Analysis" (10:44 to 11 p.m.), Fox News, 7.21 million. |
| 4. "State of the Union Analysis" (10:25 to 10:32 p.m. Eastern), Fox News, 11.67 million. | 14. "Chicago PD," NBC, 7.15 million.  |
| 5. "Live From the Red Carpet" (7 to 7:30 p.m.), ABC, 9.33 million.                       | 15. "America's Got Talent Champions," NBC, 6.74 million.                      |
| 6. "State of the Union Preview," Fox News, 9.3 million.                                  | 16. "Hawaii Five-0," CBS, 6.69 million.                                       |
| 7. "Young Sheldon," CBS, 8.99 million.   | 17. "Bull," CBS, 6.48 million.  |
| 8. "Chicago Med," NBC, 8.67 million.   | 18. "911: Lone Star," Fox, 6.39 million.                                      |
| 9. "Chicago Fire," NBC, 8.19 million.  | 19. "Mom," CBS, 6.34 million.   |
| 10. "Democratic Presidential Debate," ABC, 7.87 million.                                 | 20. "The Neighborhood," CBS, 6.23 million.                                    |

## Drunken-driving count dropped against actor in Trivago ads

**HOUSTON** (AP)—Texas prosecutors have dropped a driving while intoxicated charge filed against the actor featured on commercials for the travel booking site Trivago with a perpetual five o'clock shadow.

The case against Timothy William, 53, was dismissed Monday after Williams completed the alcohol education courses and community service required for pretrial diversion of first-time DWI offender, a spokesman for the Harris County District Attorney's Office told the

Houston Chronicle.

Williams, who lives in Germany, "took his Harris County case seriously by diligently completing programs in his home country that were comparable to our mandatory classes, and even did more than he had to in order to make sure he was complying," Nathan Beedle, the district attorney's misdemeanor division chief, told the Chronicle.

Police arrested Williams after finding him passed out behind the wheel of a vehicle stopped in a traffic lane the afternoon of April 10, 2019.

## Niece suspects elderly aunt is being isolated by her son

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I have an elderly (90-plus) aunt who lives with her son in a town about four hours away. She corresponds by letter with us regularly, and we always write back. However, it has become apparent that she's not receiving our letters because she doesn't make any comments on any of the things we write to tell her about. We suspect that her son is withholding her mail because we have written to him in the past to express our displeasure about how he treats his mother's emotional and safety needs.

In the last letter we received from her, she told us she expected to spend Christmas in her basement apartment while her son and his wife's family have Christmas festivities upstairs. It broke our hearts, but we realize that since we're so far away, there's little we can do. We've tried sending letters without our return address on the envelope, etc. to get past her son's scrutiny, but we really don't believe she's getting her mail.

Should we contact the police or social services to do a wellness check on her, or do you have another suggestion? We know she occasionally goes to a senior center in town. Should we write to her in care of the senior center? Your comments are appreciated.

SUSPICIOUS IN GEORGIA

**DEAR SUSPICIOUS:** Your relative may be having

memory issues, or your fears may be genuine. Is it possible to talk with her on the phone or visit her to make an assessment? If someone suspects that an older person is being physically, emotionally or financially abused, it should be reported so the matter can be investigated. You can do that by contacting Adult Protective Services in your aunt's state or the National Domestic Violence hotline at [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org) or 800-799-7233.

**DEAR ABBY:** A few years ago, I found some flirtatious and slightly risqué messages between my husband and a female business associate. My husband agreed that they were wrong and says he has discontinued those kinds of conversations. He has stayed in contact with her, and their friendship remains.

After dealing with the hurt for more than two years, I finally told him a few months ago the only way I would be OK with their friendship is if he introduced me to her. He promised he would, but he hasn't followed through. This week I saw on our phone bill that while on a recent business trip he was texting with her late into the night and early in the morning. I confronted him, but he continues to say they are just friends, and he is doing nothing wrong.

I'm heartbroken. I feel he has betrayed my trust. What should I do?

DISRESPECTED IN TEXAS

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



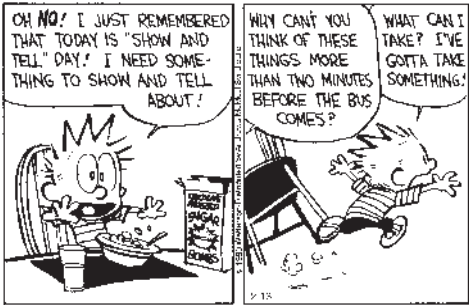
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# Richardson, Simmons lead 76ers past Clippers, 110-103



**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—Ben Simmons and Joel Embiid kept the Philadelphia 76ers close until Josh Richardson took over.

Richardson scored 17 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, helping the Sixers beat the Los Angeles Clippers 110-103 on Tuesday night.

Simmons had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for Philadelphia, which has the NBA's best home record at 25-2. Embiid also scored 26 points, and Tobias Harris added 17 points and 12 boards.

"In the fourth quarter, I started attacking more," Richardson said. "I was reading the defense. Coach put the ball in my hands and gave me the freedom to read it and attack. It's great. I itch for moments like that. In close games, we all want to be part of that positive effort and I had a part of it."

Sixers coach Brett Brown credited Richardson's ability to run the pick-and-roll and spell Simmons at point guard for helping the team pull away from Los Angeles.

"Him being a leader and coming to life has a lot to do with some of those other things," Brown said.

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 30 points, and reserve Landry Shamet scored 19 against his former team.

"I thought we lost the game because we didn't play with any continuity offensively," coach Doc Rivers said.

Richardson nailed his third 3-pointer of the quarter to give Philadelphia a 102-94 lead with 4:44 left. Then he scored on a driving left-handed layup and made the free throw to complete the 3-point play, extending the lead to 11. His free throw made it 110-100 with 1:15 remaining after the Clippers cut the deficit to single digits.

"We didn't make shots (in the fourth quarter)," Leonard said. "(Richardson) got to the paint, made some big 3s for them. He made shots."

Leonard faced the Sixers for the first time since his quadruple-dunk, buzzer-beater knocked Philadelphia of the playoffs last May. Leonard's shot gave Toronto a 92-90 victory in Game 7 and the Raptors went on to win the NBA championship.

The Sixers opened the second half with a 16-5 run, taking a 70-59 lead. Simmons, Embiid and Glenn Robinson III combined for 14 of the 16.

"It's arguably the best game those two have paired up with since I've been here," Brown said of Simmons and Embiid.

Simmons took 22 shots, just two short of tying his career best set as a rookie in 2017. Brown moved him around,



giving him opportunities away from the ball.

"I just love being a player. I don't put myself at any one position because I'm so versatile," Simmons said.

The Sixers led by 12 in the second quarter after Embiid's reverse layup two minutes in, but the Clippers chipped away. Los Angeles closed out the half with a layup by Williams and pull-up jumper by Leonard to tie it at 54.

## Pelicans 138, Trail Blazers 117

In New Orleans, Zion Williamson has recorded his first 30-point performance just nine games into his NBA career.

Williamson scored 31 points in barely 28 minutes on the court, and the New Orleans Pelicans used a dominant second half to defeat the Portland Trail Blazers 138-117 on Tuesday night.

"I expect to make an impact but I don't expect to do nothing like this," Williamson said in his usual, grinning, affable manner. "I just kind of look to come in, just kind of fit in, just not try to mess up, but my teammates and coaches are always pushing me."

"I do hold myself to high expectations, but I think it's just finding the line between reality and dreams," Williamson added. "If my teammates find me, they find me. If not, just got to make another play, get the rebound and just play defense."

Williamson used his 6-foot-6, 285-pound frame, quick feet and explosive vertical to have his way with every defender Portland tried against him. Williamson was either too strong, too fast, or both. He mixed spinning dribbles

and sudden baseline drives into his usual arsenal of soaring transition dunks and tenacious putbacks. Six of his nine rebounds came on the offensive end.

"I don't really think he's comparable to anyone that I have seen," Portland forward Carmelo Anthony said of Williamson. "Someone who is as powerful as that, who jumps like that ... you can tell he's getting better and getting a feel for the game."

JJ Redick scored 20 for New Orleans, which trailed by as many as 16 in the first quarter before taking command en route to a third straight victory. Josh Hart's 17 points included an alley-oop dunk set up by Williamson's lob in transition.

"It's kind of scary to see how good he is this early," Hart said.

Jrue Holiday contributed 16 points and 10 assists for New Orleans, while Lonzo Ball added 10 points and 10 assists.

Portland star Damian Lillard scored 20 points — less than half of his 42-point average over his previous 10 games. But his playing time was limited in the fourth quarter when the Pelicans, who led by as many as 26, had put the game out of reach.

CJ McCollum had 20 points for the Trail Blazers, and Anthony finished with 18, but just four after halftime. Hassan Whiteside had 17 points and 14 rebounds.

## Wizards 126, Bills 114

In Washington, just when it looked as if Washington's defense was going the cost the team a victory, the Wizards found a way to hold on.

Bradley Beal scored 30

points, and Washington held off Zach LaVine and the Chicago Bulls for a 126-114 win on Tuesday night.

LaVine scored 19 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter, helping the Bulls whittle an 18-point deficit down to six points. His 3 made it 114-108 with 1:54 left, but the Wizards responded with six straight points.

"I thought we kept the pace up," said Wizards point guard Ish Smith, who had nine assists and no turnovers. "Defensively, we did a great job. Zach went a little crazy towards the end, but we did a great job on both ends."

Rui Hachimura added 20 points for Washington, which won for the fourth time in six games. Shabazz Napier and Ian Mahinmi had 15 apiece.

LaVine shot 15 of 21 from the field, including 8 for 11 from 3-point range. He is slated to compete in the 3-point contest during the All-Star festivities in Chicago this weekend.

"LaVine makes big shots," Wizards coach Scott Brooks said. "He made shots that were contested. We try to take it out of his hands (but) he was still able to shoot between the two defenders — but that's what he does."

Tomas Satoransky added 19 points for Chicago, which enters the break on a six-game losing streak. The Bulls had won four straight versus Washington.

"I thought it took us too long to get our defensive legs underneath us," coach Jim Boylen said.

The Wizards led by seven at halftime and Beal's 3-pointer capped a quick 9-2 burst to open the third quarter.

## Spurs 114, Thunder 106

In Oklahoma City, LaMarcus Aldridge and the San Antonio Spurs headed into the All-Star break with a win.

It was a welcome change after a tough stretch.

Aldridge had 25 points and 14 rebounds, and the Spurs stopped a five-game slide by topping the Oklahoma City Thunder 114-106 on Tuesday night.

"Great effort on their part," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "I'm happy for them. It's been tough so far this first half, and they've been in a lot of games and we just haven't finished them. But tonight we did, so they deserve a lot of credit."

Dejounte Murray also scored 25 points for San Antonio, which had dropped eight of 10 overall. Patty Mills had 20 points, and fellow reserve Derrick White finished with 17.

Led by Aldridge and Murray, the Spurs made 25 of 27 foul shots. Aldridge went 7 for 8, and Murray was a perfect 6 for 6.

"Proud of my teammates, proud of myself," Murray said. "We fought hard, we showed poise and showed we could finish the game against a good team."

Oklahoma City dropped its second straight after a stretch of nine wins in 10 games. Chris Paul scored 31 points for the Thunder, and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 17.

## Rockets 116, Celtics 105

In Houston, after James Harden and Russell Westbrook combined for 78 points Tuesday night, Harden was asked just how dangerous this combination can be when it gets rolling.

Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid, center, goes up for a shot between Los Angeles Clippers' Ivica Zubac, right, and Kawhi Leonard during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020, in Philadelphia.

"It's pretty scary," Harden said.

Harden scored 42 points, Westbrook had 36 and Houston snapped Boston's seven-game win streak with a 116-105 victory over the Celtics in a game that showcased the Rockets' dynamic small-ball lineup.

Harden had eight rebounds and seven assists and Westbrook finished with 10 rebounds and five assists as the Rockets used a starting lineup without a true center after trading Clint Capela last week.

"It's helping both of them," coach Mike D'Antoni said. "It should. It opens up the floor for them. Both of them are great drivers and great finishers ... and it should trickle down to everybody else, too."

Houston broke it open with a 15-2 run that made it 116-98 with about two minutes left. Harden scored six points during the decisive stretch, and Danuel House had five.

Boston had two turnovers and missed numerous shots to allow the Rockets to turn the close game into one where D'Antoni cleared the bench for the last minute with the game well in hand.

"Harden was great ... and Westbrook was great," Boston coach Brad Stevens said. "Those guys are two of the best in the world and they showed it again tonight."

The Rockets enjoyed a big advantage at the line, going 37 for 42 compared to 20 for 25 for the Celtics. Harden made 17 of 18 foul shots.

Gordon Hayward had 20 points in Boston's first loss since Jan. 26. Jaylen Brown scored 19, and Jayson Tatum had 15 on 5-for-15 shooting.

Westbrook, who is in his first season in Houston after a trade from Oklahoma City, is excited for the possibilities for this lineup once they have more experience with it.

"We can be pretty successful," he said. "We've just got to find ways to continue to be effective, efficient and make the right plays."

Harden, who scored 19 points in the third quarter to help Houston take control, picked up his fifth foul with about eight minutes left. But he was able to stay in the game and avoid fouling out.

Robert Covington had 12 points and seven rebounds in his fourth game since he was acquired as part of the four-team trade that sent Capela to the Hawks.



# Chargers' Rivers will enter free agency



**COSTA MESA, Calif.** (AP)—Philip Rivers' 16-year career with the Chargers has come to an end.

The franchise announced Monday that Rivers will enter free agency and won't return to Los Angeles for the upcoming season. General manager Tom Telesco said in a statement that as they talked through various scenarios with Rivers, it became apparent it would be best for both "to turn the page on what has truly been a remarkable run."

Rivers' future in powder blue was the main storyline late in the season after the Chargers were eliminated from postseason consideration. He said during the final weeks that he intended to play in 2020, even if that meant going to another team.

The 38-year old Rivers was emotional and in a reflective mood after the Chargers' 31-21 loss to Kansas City in the season finale. He acknowledged it would be weird to be in another uniform but didn't think it would be much of an adjustment.

## Ex-NFL player sentenced for being drunk, armed at meeting

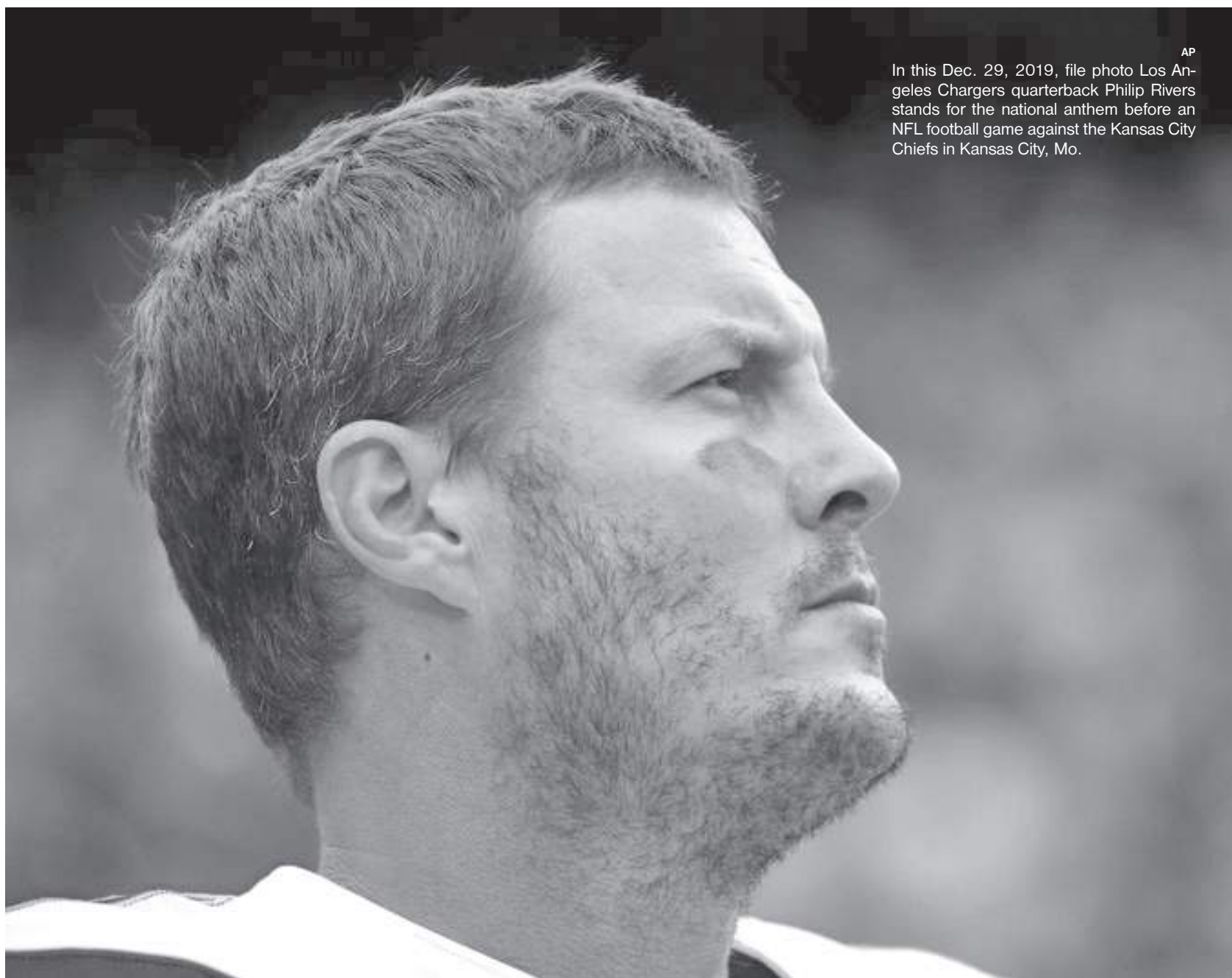
**FOREST CITY, Iowa** (AP)—A former professional football player was given two days in jail and two years of probation for being drunk and armed with a handgun at a county supervisors meeting in northern Iowa.

Mike Stensrud, 63, a Winnebago County supervisor, was sentenced Friday to the probation and 90 days of jail time, but 88 days were suspended.

He drank alcohol from a cup during the May 21 meeting in Forest City, and a breath test showed his blood alcohol level was above the legal limit for driving, court records say. Stensrud acknowledged having a pistol, which an officer found in one of Stensrud's pockets, police said.

He has said he sought treatment for his drinking earlier last year and was sober until the day of the meeting.

Stensrud, who played at Iowa State before going pro, was in the NFL for a decade before retiring in 1989. Stensrud has served on the Winnebago County board since 2009.



AP  
In this Dec. 29, 2019, file photo Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Philip Rivers stands for the national anthem before an NFL football game against the Kansas City Chiefs in Kansas City, Mo.

Los Angeles made the playoffs in 2018 but was 5-11 this season with nine losses by one score. The seven-win decline was the worst dropoff in the league in 2019 and the second biggest in franchise history. Rivers' 4,615 passing yards were fourth in the league, but his 20 interceptions were third most and just one off tying a career high.

Rivers moved his family to Florida last month from their longtime home in San Diego. He commuted between the team's Orange County headquarters and San Diego since the franchise moved in 2017.

"I am very grateful to the Spanos family and the Chargers organization for the last 16 years," Rivers said in a

statement. "In anything you do, it's the people you do it with that make it special. There are so many relationships and memories with coaches, support staff and teammates that will last forever, and for that I am so thankful. We had a lot of great moments, beginning in San Diego and then finishing in L.A. I wish my teammates and coaches nothing but the best moving forward."

Rivers was selected fourth overall by the New York Giants in the 2004 draft but was traded to the Chargers in a draft day deal for Eli Manning, who announced his retirement last month. Rivers went on to set 30 franchise records with the Chargers and was an eight-

time selection to the Pro Bowl. He also led the Chargers to the playoffs six times but only twice since 2010.

His 224 consecutive regular-season starts are second-most among quarterbacks in NFL history and his 123 wins are ninth. He is one of six quarterbacks to eclipse 50,000 career yards and his 397 touchdowns are sixth.

"I've said before that Philip can still compete at a top-starter level and, in a perfect world, number 17 is your quarterback forever. Obviously, we live in an imperfect world where the only constant is change," Telesco said. "I think Philip's tremendous perspective, both when it comes to football and when it

comes to life, helped lend clarity to a very complex situation."

The Chargers have plenty of questions that need to be answered during the offseason as they prepare to move into SoFi Stadium in Inglewood. They have the sixth pick in the draft in what looks to be a deep quarterback class that includes LSU's Joe Burrow, Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa and Oregon's Justin Herbert. The Rivers announcement comes two weeks before the NFL scouting combine begins in Indianapolis.

Los Angeles also has quarterbacks Tyrod Taylor and Easton Stick under contract. Taylor will be entering his 10th season and has 46 starts with Buffalo and Cleveland.

Stick was selected in the fifth round last season.

Besides Rivers, the Chargers' other top free agents include running back Melvin Gordon, tight end Hunter Henry, safety Adrian Phillips and fullback Derek Watt. Running back Austin Ekeler is a restricted free agent. Telesco said last month that he expects to have some salary cap flexibility when free agency begins March 18.

"There's only one Philip Rivers, and we've been fortunate to call him our QB1 for the better part of two decades," owner Dean Spanos said. "We cannot thank Philip enough for giving it his all on every single down and for the memories he created that will last a lifetime."

## Source: Browns star Garrett meets with NFL about return

**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Suspended Browns star defensive end Myles Garrett met Monday with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to discuss his possible reinstatement, a person familiar with the meeting told The Associated Press.

Garrett, who was banned indefinitely for ripping off Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph's helmet and hitting him over the head with it during the closing seconds of a Nov. 15 game, discussed

his situation with Goodell and other league officials in New York, said the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the meeting.

There is no timetable for Garrett's return. However, he has expressed remorse for his conduct, and his meeting with Goodell was a necessary step in order to get back on the field in 2020.

Garrett's suspension ended the 24-year-old's season and

was a major blow for the Browns. They went 2-4 in the final six games without their sacks leader and finished 6-10.

Once Garrett is cleared, he'll be able to take part in the Browns' offseason program under new coach Kevin Stefanski. Garrett was allowed back at the Browns' facility toward the end of the season to rehab an injury.

The No. 1 overall pick in 2017, Garrett has had an exemplary record since joining

the league, and his actions toward Rudolph were uncharacteristic. He appealed his suspension, but it was upheld by independent officer James Thrash despite Garrett's allegation that Rudolph used a racial slur.

Garrett's attack on Rudolph came after the two wrestled on the field as the Browns were closing out a rare win over their AFC North rival, and it touched off a brawl involving several other players.

Steelers guard Maurkice Pouncey received a three-game suspension—it was later reduced to two—for hitting and kicking Garrett, and Browns defensive lineman Larry Ogunjobi got a one-game ban for shoving a helmet-less Rudolph to the ground.

The league also fined the Browns and Steelers \$250,000 apiece and handed out penalties to players for leaving the bench area and coming onto the field.



# Red Sox make Roenicke interim manager



**FORT MYERS, Fla.** (AP)—It took

Ron Roenicke almost five years to get another chance as a major league manager.

He'll need to wait at least until next week for "permanency."

The Red Sox made Roenicke their interim manager Tuesday, promoting the former Brewers skipper to replace Alex Cora on the day Boston's pitchers and catchers reported for the start of spring training.

Although there is no expiration date on Roenicke's tenure, the interim tag will stay until Major League Baseball completes its investigation into whether the Red Sox engaged in illegal sign-stealing during their 2018 World Series championship season. If the probe clears Roenicke, who has denied being part of any rules violations, he is expected to stay.

"We felt that naming Ron our interim manager was the best way to respect the investigation that's ongoing into our 2018 club. But we feel very strongly about Ron's ability to lead this group and how well-suited he is for this task," Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom said in a news conference on the eve of the team's first formal workout.

"We have no reason to think that there is anything that would cause an adverse result for Ron in this investigation," Bloom said. "We're going to respect the ongoing investigation and we'll address permanency once it's complete."

Just one year after winning the World Series in his first season in Boston, Cora was let go when Commissioner Rob Manfred named him as a ringleader behind the Astros'



AP  
Ron Roenicke, right, speaks as Red Sox Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom looks on after being named interim manager of the Boston Red Sox baseball team Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020, in Fort Myers, Fla.

missing the playoffs for the first time since 2015.

"We're very disappointed—as all these players are—in what happened last year," Roenicke said. "And our focus is to try to get back in the playoffs, and seeing what happens after that."

Roenicke spent five years as the Brewers manager from 2010-15, winning 96 games and the NL Central title in his first season and finishing as runner-up for NL manager of the year. In all, he led Milwaukee to a 342-331 record in five seasons.

"Right away, I thought I would" get another chance, Roenicke said. "But then as years go by you, you kind of wonder about it."

Roenicke batted .238 with 17 homers and 113 RBIs as an outfielder and pinch hitter with six teams from 1981-88. The younger brother of major-leaguer Gary Roenicke, he went on to coach in the Dodgers and Angels systems before taking over the Brewers in the 2011 season.

"Whether it's a good season, which I had my first year, or whether it's a poor season, which we had my last year there, you're still learning things. And all the time I'm thinking about, 'What could I have done better?'" he said. "I want to do this job better."

2017 illegal sign-stealing. The Red Sox have maintained that there was no similar scheme after Cora took over in Boston the next year.

Manfred said last week that he hoped to have the Red Sox investigation completed before the start of spring training. But a person with knowledge of the probe said Tuesday the investigation will continue at least into next week. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because there was no formal announcement.

Red Sox pitchers and catchers reported Tuesday and have their first workout Wednesday. Rather than open spring training without a manager, the team gave the job to Roenicke—for now.

General manager Brian O'Halloran said the team heard from people inside and outside the organization who spoke highly of Roenicke.

"I know you did a lot of background check on me," Roenicke said. "I'm glad it turned out well."

Roenicke, 63, takes over

a team that is dealing with the fallout not only from the cheating investigation but also the salary dump of onetime AL MVP Mookie Betts and Cy Young winner David Price.

"You don't replace Mookie Betts, who is one of the best players in the game. David Price ... you don't replace him. But you move forward," Roenicke said. "This team, they're focused on what they can do and showing people wrong."

"This is a really good ballclub. There are some tremendous ath-

letes on this team," he said. "And you hope that the guys you replace them with become great players. And whether it's this year, whether it's a few years. You just keep moving on."

After winning a franchise-record 108 regular-season games and the World Series in 2018, Cora's first year, the Red Sox followed that up by

## González 'remorseful' for role in Astros' sign stealing

**FORT MYERS, Fla.** (AP)—Marwin González became the first batter from the 2017 Houston Astros team that won the World Series to publicly apologize for his role in the sign-stealing scandal, expressing regret Tuesday after reporting to spring training with the Minnesota Twins.

"I'm remorseful for everything that happened in 2017, for everything that we did as a group, and for the players that were affected directly by us by doing this and some other things," González said. He later added: "I wish that we could take it back, but there's nothing we can do now."

Major League Baseball's investigation into the allegation first made publicly by former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers resulted in one-season suspensions for manager AJ

Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow, a \$5 million fine and the loss of Houston's first- and second-round draft picks in 2020 and 2021. Hinch and Luhnow were fired by the Astros, and Boston manager Alex Cora and New York Mets manager Carlos Beltrán also lost their jobs for their involvement in the sign-sealing system for the Astros, Cora was bench coach and Beltrán was a player on the 2017 team.

Former Astros pitcher Charlie Morton, now with the Tampa Bay Rays, said Saturday he regretted not making an effort to stop the sign-stealing at the time. The current Astros have mostly avoided commenting since the results were released from MLB's probe into the elaborate method they used to try to tip off teammates as to what type of pitch was coming.

González, a multi-positional player starting his second season of a \$21 million, two-year contract with the Twins, had a career year in 2017 with the Astros. He hit .303 with 23 home runs and 90 RBIs in 134 games, with an OPS (.907) that was 148 points better than any other season of his eight-year career.

"I can't control how people think of me. I can control how hard I work, and that's the way that I prepare for this season," González said at Minnesota's training facility in Fort Myers, Florida.

As for whether the Astros would have won the title without the assistance of the sign-stealing system, featuring outfield video cameras and trash can banging?

"You're never going to know. That was a great team. Great guys, too. Beside every-

thing that happened, I know for a fact that they're great guys, but it's hard to answer that question," González said.

The Twins have two new pitchers, Rich Hill and Kenta Maeda, who were on the Los Angeles Dodgers team that lost to the Astros in the 2017 World Series. González said he planned to speak to them but downplayed the lasting effect of his connection to the scandal.

"I'm sure we're going to have a great relationship," González said.

The players still with the Astros will have a harder time escaping the backlash around baseball.

"They're going to get booed. Hopefully they can get through that," González said. "I know they have a great team, too, and I hope to face them in the playoffs."

## Source: González, Mariners agree to minor league deal

The Mariners are adding depth to their outfield, agreeing Tuesday to a minor league contract with former All-Star Carlos González, according to a person with knowledge of the deal.

González's deal is pending a successful physical, the person told The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the team had not announced the agreement. If added to the 40-man roster, González would get a one-year contract with a \$750,000 salary in the major leagues.

USA Today first reported the deal.

González is several years removed from being at his best when he was in Colorado. González was an All-Star in 2012-13 and 2016 with the Rockies. The 34-year-old played with the Rockies through 2018 when he hit .276 with 16 home runs and 64 RBIs in 132 games for Colorado.

Last season, González signed a minor league deal with Cleveland and was called up by the Indians in mid-April. He appeared in 30 games, then was cut.

González latched on with the Cubs, lasted just 15 games and was released in late June. He batted .200 in 145 plate appearances and did not play during the final three months of the season.

González would appear to be a longshot to make Seattle's roster with the Mariners focus on their young players and a glut of corner outfielders. But the unknown status of Mitch Haniger following core muscle surgery has opened up an opportunity in right field, at least early in the season. González is likely to be lumped in with the likes of Jake Fraley, Braden Bishop and Kyle Lewis in competition for the corner outfield spots until Haniger returns. (AP)



# Saipan Marathon 2020 early bird deadline tomorrow

For the best prices, participants in Saipan Marathon 2020—scheduled for March 14—are encouraged to register by tomorrow's early bird deadline.

The Saipan Marathon 2020 is an annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority aimed at drawing visitors and media attention to the destination. This year's event adds a 5K course to its 10K, half marathon, and full marathon repertoire.

"This year's marathon is the most inviting yet with a comfortable 5K course that is perfect for children, families, runners of all fitness levels, and even walkers," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "The best part is, even a 5K participant gets to enjoy all the benefits of joining the marathon, including a medal, a finishers T-shirt, a great dinner buffet awards dinner, and of course, bragging rights. Don't miss this Friday's early bird deadline!"

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO


From left, Jonalyn Agulto, Jeafanie Agulto, Francine Joy Ebu, and Kelli Acebo finish the Saipan Marathon 2017 held on March 25, 2017.

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Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Division of Parks and Grounds, and Hawaiian Rock Products.

The Saipan Marathon is certified by the International Association of Athletic Federations through the Association of International Marathons and Dis-

tance Races. Registration for the event is now available via webscorer.  SAIPAN MARATHON 2020 residents is March 6, 2020, at 5pm (ChST). Valid photo ID is required to register. Registration includes the awards banquet, a finishers T-shirt, and a certificate of completion. Those who register by Feb. 14, 2020, will have their names included in the official 2020 Saipan Marathon booklet and on the finishers photo backdrop and will receive a personalized race bib. Additional fees for these benefits will apply after Feb. 14, 2020. The race will start and finish at American Memorial Park, starting at 4:30am for the full marathon, at 5:30am for the half marathon, at 5:45am for the 10K, and at 6am for the 5K. The cut-off time for the full marathon will be 8:30am at the half-way point. There is no cut-off time for the half marathon, 10K, or 5K. All competitors are required to pick up their race packets on March 13, 2020, at American Memorial Park. Pickup times are 3-4pm for team/groups/tour groups/etc. and 4-6pm for individuals only. For more information, visit The Marianas Calendar at [www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com) or contact MVA Community Projects Specialist Ed Diaz at 1.670.664.3210 or [ediaz@mymarianas.com](mailto:ediaz@mymarianas.com). (PR)

students. The last day to register for CNMI and U.S. residents is March 6, 2020, at 5pm (ChST).

Valid photo ID is required to register. Registration includes the awards banquet, a finishers T-shirt, and a certificate of completion.

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## TRIPLE J

From Page 28

president Jay Jones personally gave the keys to the eight-seat sports utility vehicle to NMIFA president Jerry Tan.

"The Tan Sui Lin Foundation and Triple J Enterprises share the same passion for serving our community. We also understand the commitment it takes to make something happen from the inception of an idea into the fabrication of a new venture and maintaining a plan of action for sustainability. We commend Jerry Tan and the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association for their dedication to this project for our island community. We are proud to partner with Tan Sui Lin Foundation supporting the youth soccer league and we look forward to seeing the sport grow on Saipan," read a

statement from the Jones family on the renewal of the vehicle sponsorship with NMIFA.

Tan was appreciative of Triple J Enterprises and the Jones family's renewal of the vehicle sponsorship with NMIFA as well their commitment to the sport of soccer in the CNMI.

"They've been doing it multiple years already. They keep extending. It's not a one year deal but actually a two-year deal that's renewable. They've been doing it since 2013," he said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune*.

Triple J Enterprises' vehicle sponsorship agreement started in 2013 with the turnover of a 2013 Hyundai Accent sedan to use for its operations for two years.

"The partnership with Triple J has been going on for the past seven years and we really appreciate Triple J believing in our sport and in the past we were provided one vehicle and

now this year we're provided two vehicles," said Tan.

The NMIFA president said the vehicles play a big role in their sports program, as they allow their national coaches to be where they need to be at any given time.

"These are assigned to our national coaches and these are very, very helpful not only for providing for the coaches but it also allows the coaches to drive around whenever they have matches or training. For a program like NMIFA, the soccer program, to be successful we cannot do it without the support from our partners especially the private sector partners. We appreciate what Triple J has given this to NMIFA especially Mr. Bob Jones and Jay Jones."

According to a review from Car and Driver, the 2020 Hyundai Palisade is not Hyundai's first three-row SUV, but

it certainly is its best and biggest. The Palisade replaces the Hyundai Santa Fe XL, which suffered from a cramped third row fit for only occasional use. The Palisade's silky ride quality and premium interior appointments teeter at the edge of luxury. Offering three spacious rows of seating, loads of safety and driver-assist technology, all-wheel drive, and distinctive styling, it's a bold statement for this Korean manufacturer.

The 2020 Hyundai Palisade Sport Model Triple J provided to NMIFA starts off at \$36,995 and goes up from there to the SEL and Limited Editions. The three new SUVs come jam-packed with advanced technology features like Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, available fully digital instrument cluster, available surround view monitor, and seven USB outlets.

## LABAUSA

From Page 28

to do my best to represent our islands well."

Labausa, however, admits that training with Samoa's elite athletes under Samoa Weightlifting team head coach Jerry Wallwork is tough.

"Our training is very serious and intense. We train two to three times a day, six days a week. Each training session can last from 1-2 hours but it is very intense. We do a lot of squatting and variations of the snatch and clean and jerk. We also do a lot of bodybuilding exercises for the back, upper body, and core to keep the body strong and to prevent injuries from when we perform the explosive lifts."

A basketball player growing up, Labausa actually got

her start in weightlifting completely by accident.

"It's a funny story, I just finished the 2014 Micronesian Games playing in the sport of basketball, which we ended up getting bronze for. I knew nothing about weightlifting. I returned to Hawaii as I was attending the University of Hawaii there. I was at work, a waitress at the time, and one of the restaurant's regular customers that I was attending to told me that I looked like I would be good at weightlifting."

Labausa eventually was invited to check out an Olympic weightlifting gym in Honolulu and that same customer, who remarked she would be good at weightlifting, ended up being her first weightlifting coach.

"When I tried the snatch and clean and jerk, I just fell in

love with the sport. It made me feel like superwoman and it still makes me feel that way."

As far as the measles epidemic currently gripping the island, Labausa said she tries not to worry and just makes sure she remains healthy.

"I think I can only speak for myself when I say I'm not concerned at all. I made sure my immunizations were up to date before going on this trip and got an extra booster shot just in case. We all stay in the gym where our training camp is at so there's not much contact with other people outside of weightlifting, so the likelihood [of getting measles] is pretty slim," she said.

But if there's a drawback training in Samoa, Labausa admitted it would be pining for loved ones and the food

back home.

"I miss the food and my fiancé. But Samoa is a beautiful place, and they have such a simple lifestyle just like Saipan, so I haven't been too homesick yet," she said.

Half a decade into the sport, Labausa said weightlifting has given her more than she has given it.

"Weightlifting is a very hard sport. It takes a lot of physical strength and most importantly, mental strength to train and compete. The sport has brought me more than just strength but it's taught me patience, grit, self-confidence, and has taught me the importance of having a strong work ethic, which I feel like transfers to my daily life. I've been lifting for about five years now but I feel like everything has just begun."

## UPWARDS

From Page 28

ter, a 3K, and a 5K course. The event was cancelled last year as the island was still reeling from the effects of Super Typhoon Yutu, which devastated Saipan and neighboring Tinian in October 2018.

In 2018, the last time SSC hosted the event, club stalwarts Kento Akimaru and Jinju Thompson topped the event in the waters off Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

Kento was the No. 1 overall finisher in the longest race of the day, completing the three-loop course (nearly 3 kilometers) in 32 minutes flat for his third straight victory in the "Mighty" course. In the women's division, Thompson was the first out of the water and seventh overall after recording 35:12.

In the so called "Meek" two-loop course (about 2K), youth swimmer Wataru Kadokura was the first male and No. 1 overall finisher as he made it to shore at the 33:50 mark. He was about a minute ahead of women's champion and fellow SSC member Kaithlynn Chavez, who lost a few seconds after heading the wrong direction on the way to the finish line and ended up timing in at 33:51.

SSC is an age group swim

club on Saipan founded in 1974 by CNMI sports hall of famers Bill and Jean Sakovich. The team practices year round and participates in numerous local and off-island swim meets.

SSC has been providing children on Saipan opportunities to engage in swimming activities, both recreational and at competitive levels for almost four decades now. Encouraging physical activities and developing healthy lifestyle habits is an important aspect of its program. Equally important to SSC is fostering community involvement and positive character traits including good sportsmanship, teamwork, goal setting, and friendship.

SSC swimmers train throughout the year to improve themselves by participating in both local and international meets and have been true "goodwill ambassadors" representing the CNMI in the United States, Guam, American Samoa, New Caledonia, Hong Kong, Australia, Japan, Republic of Palau, Pohnpei, Tahiti, Qatar, Spain, Italy, Turkey, China, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Russia.

For more information on the Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim or the SSC, email [saipanswimclub@gmail.com](mailto:saipanswimclub@gmail.com) or message them on their Facebook page.





**Richardson,  
Simmons lead  
76ers past  
Clippers,  
110-103  
PAGE 24**

# Saipan Tribune Sports

**Saipan  
Marathon  
2020 early  
bird deadline  
tomorrow  
PAGE 27**



28 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Labausa making waves in Samoa



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS  
Antonette Labausa, fifth from left standing, poses with members of the Samoa Weightlifting Team in their training center in Apia, Samoa. Inset, Labausa breaks her personal best in the clean and jerk by lifting 101kg.



By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

media message.

In fact, the 5'2", 76-kg Labausa just last week broke her personal best in the clean and jerk by lifting 101kg.

The daughter of James Labausa



and Cecilia Tudela said with the hard work she continues to put in, she is confident she can break more of her personal bests and perform well at the Oceania Championships.

"My goal for the Oceania Championships is to improve my best competition total by 20-30kgs. I am aiming for a gold medal and I want

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## Upwards of 50 to take part in Meek & Mighty

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rain or shine or rough seas notwithstanding, the Saipan Swim Club's 2020 edition of the Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim will still be a go this Saturday, Feb. 15, in the waters off Kanoa Resort in Susupe.

SSC coach Richard Sikkel said he's fully aware of the forecast this Saturday and has been monitoring the coast, especially the waters off Kanoa Resort the past few days.

"Hopefully the wind dies down a bit. We swam the course on Monday and it was pretty rough. We will assess and adjust the course if we have to. The swimmers' safety is our top priority," he said.

Sikkel said he expects upwards of 50 swimmers to take part in the open water swim early Saturday morning.

Registration for the 2020 Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim is at 7am with starting time at 8am. There will be three distances for the 2020 Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim—a 1-kilome-

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## Triple J reaffirms vehicle sponsorship with NMIFA

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Triple J Motors renewed its vehicle sponsorship with the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association

by turning over a spanking new, top-of-the-line Hyundai 2020 Palisade during a short and simple ceremony last Friday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in

Koblerville. Triple J Enterprises, Inc. CEO and chair Robert H. Jones and senior vice

**See TRIPLE J on Page 27**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Triple J Enterprises, Inc. CEO and chair Robert H. Jones, right, and senior vice president Jay Jones flank Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan during the company's renewal of its vehicle sponsorship with NMIFA. On the background is the 2020 Hyundai 2020 Palisade the company is allowing the sports association to use for two years.

For weightlifter Antonette Labausa, Feb. 23 would mark her second month training in Samoa.

The 25-year-old left Saipan for Samoa last Dec. 23 to train for the 2020 Oceania Championships in April and so far so good for the former Da'Ok Academy teacher.

"I am training in Apia, Samoa. My training has been going great. Since I've been here for the past seven weeks I have already increased my personal bests on my training total by 10kg. My snatch increased by 3kg and my clean and jerk increased by 7kg. I couldn't even do that training on my own on Saipan. I spent close to a year training without breaking a personal best. The training atmosphere here with Samoa's elite athletes has really pushed me to progress really quickly and I am sure I will progress even more before the Oceania Championships in April," she told *Saipan Tribune* in a social